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SUNDAY Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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MAY 18, 2008

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Do you support the
proposal to create a
Marine Monument in
the northern islands?

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to cast your vote.

INSIDE



Irresponsible

Barack Obama laid into John McCain on Friday for advancing a tough-guy foreign policy that he called "naive and irresponsible."

United States...Page 17



China Tragedy

After their daughter was born, Bi Kaiwei and his wife, Meilin, decided to adhere to China's one-child policy and its slogan, "Have fewer kids, live better lives."

Focus...Page 19



Wedding Bells

Though Ashlee Simpson and Pete Wentz are keeping a tight lid on their nuptials, it's looking like a wedding is imminent.

Life & Style... Page 23

Article XII prohibits foreclosure prevention initiative. **PAGE 2**
NMC bridge program aims to increase minority participation. **PAGE 3**

Continental eyes China market



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

LIGHTS OF HOPE

Hundreds of illuminated candles surround Thelma B. Inos and her granddaughter Aleanah Serman, 4, as they honor cancer survivors and remember those who have lost the battle against cancer during the 2008 Marianas March Against Cancer at Hopwood Junior High School track and field in Chalan Piao Friday night.

KNT holds fam tour for agents



Officials and agents of a major travel agency in Japan visited Saipan and Rota to learn more about the islands last week.

Kinki Nippon Tourist held the three-day familiarization tour for 11 employees at the agency's Kansai business headquarters. The participants included KNT-Kansai general manager Hiroshi Tsuchiya, managers Ishohashi Masayasu and Shiro Saito, and eight tour agents.

They arrived on Saipan on May 14, and flew to Rota the following day. They had a Chamorro dinner at Rota Resort and met with Edward Maratita, a member of the Marianas Visitors Authority board of directors. Maratita thanked KNT for visiting Rota and for operating charter flights to Rota.

See MVA on Page 4

KNT Kansai staff pose for a photo during the three-day familiarization tour for 11 employees at the agency's Kansai business headquarters.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Plans are underway for Continental Micronesia to bring flights from China to the region.

Wally Dias, the airline's staff vice president for sales and marketing, said Continental had begun laying the groundwork for future flights between China and the Marianas.

See CHINA on Page 4

Oil sets record near \$128; pump price at high, too

By ADAM SCHRECK
AP BUSINESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—News that Saudi Arabia had boosted its oil output by 300,000 barrels a day was greeted as a non-event on oil markets—the move wasn't anywhere near the kind of production increase needed to bring prices down on Friday.

See OIL PRICE on Page 4



High gas prices posted at a Shell gas station in Redwood City, Calif., Wednesday, May 14, 2008, as a Toyota Prius hybrid drives by.

Around the CNMI

Article XII prohibits foreclosure prevention initiative



IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Department of Public Safety police officer Jesse Seman shows to his sons, Jesse Jr. and Tye, the wreath that was offered for the officers who died in the line of duty during the 2008 National Peace Officer Memorial Day celebration at the DPS central office in Susupe Thursday afternoon.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development said that Article XII of the CNMI Constitution prohibits the federal government from implementing foreclosure prevention initiatives such as the Federal Housing Administration Secure Plan in the CNMI.

HUD Honolulu Field Office Director Gordan Furutani said with 60 percent of CNMI homeowners facing foreclosure, foreclosure prevention programs are needed in the island.

The FHASecure plan, a foreclosure prevention plan, allows families with strong credit histories who had been making timely mortgage payments before their loans reset-but are now in default-to qualify for refinancing.

In addition, FHA implements risk-based premiums that match the borrower's credit profile with the insurance premium they pay- that is riskier borrowers pay more.

Furutani explained that the way FHASecure works is for the borrower to borrow money from the lender that would help pay for the borrower's mortgage. HUD backs the borrower by allowing the lender to loan the money, however if the borrower fails to make payments to lender, HUD will pay the lender off, and in turn HUD will claim and own the borrower's property and house.

"There is no FHASecure plan on Saipan because your land is inalienable. The law states that you would have to be a Northern Marianas Descent to own land in the CNMI and this prohibits us from implementing this sort of program," Furutani said.

Last August, President Bush announced HUD's new FHASecure plan that would help an estimated 240,000 families avoid foreclosure by enhancing its refinancing program.

According to HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson, "Many hard-working American families who were able to make their

mortgage payments under the initial teaser terms of the exotic loan are now struggling to make ends meet because their rates have doubled or tripled."

"FHASecure will bring stability to the housing market and give eligible families who were in good financial standing before their loans reset a chance to keep their homes," he adds.

Article XII is a provision in the CNMI Constitution that restricts ownership of land in the Commonwealth to persons of Northern Marianas descent.

Section 805 of the Covenant requires the Commonwealth to maintain this land ownership provision for 25 years after the termination of the Trusteeship agreement.

This mandatory 25-year period will end in 2011. After that date, the Commonwealth may continue, revise, or suspend Article XII as it sees fit.

"If we can take the land and the house we could implement the program but the law says you have to be a Chamorro [or a Carolinian]. So that prohibits us from implementing the program. The FHA program is a program intended to help stop foreclosures," Furutani said.

Rota NMC announces schedule of workshop and training

The Cooperative Research, Education, and Extension service, under the NMC's Community Programs and Services Unit (COMPASS) is pleased to announce the upcoming schedule of training and workshop.

CNMI commercial pesticides safety education training certification ornamental & turf (category IV Rota) would be held May 20-23, 2008.

Interested applicants should be acquainted with the following schedule and presenters.

This workshop will be held at NMC's Rota campus room B-2 (8:30am-4pm).

NMC CREES Rota Joaquin Tenorio PhD, Entomologist, will present the principles of Pest Control and Biology.

NMC CREES from Rota Alejandro E. Badilles will present topics about Pesticides Hazard & the Environment, Transportation Loading, Per-

sonal Protective Equipment and Handling, Weed Science, and Plant Pathology.

NMC CREES from Saipan Arnold Route will present topics regarding math calibration and calculation, pesticides label, and pesticides handling decision.

From Saipan's Department of Environmental Quality representative Carlos Katebangan will talk about rules and regulations.

The requirement of attending this workshop is that you must hold a valid Category IV license. Those who have an expired license must attend the entire workshop as well in order to have a re-certification. Person holding other pesticide license cannot use this workshop for re-certification purpose.

For any more information, you can contact Alejandro Badilles at 287-0554 or 532-9513. (Jacqueline Dela Cruz)

DEQ Managaha Island assigned green flag

The Division of Environmental Quality said none of the samples collected from Managaha Island contained excessive concentration of fecal indicator bacteria nor did they exceed the CNMI Marine Water Quality Standards.

DEQ analyzes water samples collected from Managaha's recreational beaches and dock this week as part of the regularly scheduled sampling. Therefore,

DEQ assigns all of the sampled beach sites a green flag and enjoy your waters.

The Division of Environmental Quality analyzed a total of 11 samples from the shore surrounding Managaha this week. DEQ welcomes all inquiries as to the quality of the beach water. The public is encouraged to contact DEQ 664-8500 with any questions concerning this matter. (DEQ)

DISCONNECTION NOTICE

PTI would like to remind its customers that payments not received by close of business on May 20th, will result in temporary suspension of all telephone services after 6:00 p.m. on that day. To prevent temporary suspension, customers must pay their bills on or before May 20th.

THIS WILL BE THE ONLY NOTIFICATION PTI CUSTOMERS WILL RECEIVE*.

Per an earlier announcement, PTI is no longer mailing out past due notices as of 11/01/06.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

MAY 17, 2008 (Amended)

PURSUANT TO PUBLIC LAW 8-41, THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE COMMONWEALTH DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CDA) THRU ITS ACTING CHAIRMAN HEREBY INFORMS THE GENERAL PUBLIC THAT THE CDA BOARD OF DIRECTORS WILL HOLD A REGULAR MEETING ON TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2008 AT 10:00 A.M. THE MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE CDA CONFERENCE ROOM, SECOND FLOOR, WAKIN'S BUILDING, CHALAN PALE ARNOLD ROAD, SAIPAN. THE AGENDA FOR THIS MEETING IS AS FOLLOWS:

AGENDA

- I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
 - 1. Roll Call
 - 2. Swearing in of Mr. Jesse B. Manglona
 - 3. Adoption of Agenda
 - 4. Adoption of Minutes- March 27, 2008
- II. PUBLIC COMMENTS
- III. REPORTS
 - 1. Financial Report – CDA
- IV. DIVISIONS/COMMITTEES
 - 1. Development Corporation Division (DCD)
 - a. Status of Pending Items
 - b. DBD/Public Finance Committee
 - c. Status of the DBD Funds
 - 3. Administrative Matters/Personnel & Budget Committee
 - a. Administration's Report
 - b. Fiscal Year 2009 Budget
 - c. Fiscal Year 2008 – Budget Reprogramming
 - 4. QC Program/Economic Development Activities Committee
- V. OLD BUSINESS
- VI. NEW BUSINESS
 - 1. IEDC – Building Cutting-Edge, Public-Private Partnerships
- VII. OTHER MATTERS
- VIII. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items. (Note: Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 13(a)(7) and Section 13(c), the Board may vote to meet in executive session)

/s/PEDRO I. ITIBUS
Acting Chairman, CDA Board of Directors



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PRESENTS

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For the benefit of the World Youth Day Delegates to Sydney, Australia

NMC bridge program aims to increase minority participation



The Northern Marianas College is seeking high school students who have a strong interest and talent in science, math, or engineering to participate in

a competitive summer bridge program that will help them prepare for college.

The bridge program, funded by the "Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation (LSAMP)" program, prepares future college freshmen for the

unexpected and stressful experiences of the first year in college. The main goal of the LSAMP program is to increase the number of underrepresented minorities in the fields of science, math, and engineering. These minority groups include American Indians,

African American, people of Hispanic origin, and Pacific Islanders. Last year, LSAMP participants who had earned their bachelor's degree received \$40,500 per year to complete their advanced degrees.

During the eight-week pro-

gram, which will begin June 9, 2008 and end on August 1, 2008, students will be enrolled in a college life skills course and will also take two transferable, college level courses: college trigonometry and general chemistry. The LSAMP program will pay all costs for tuition, supplies, and fees.

In addition to a strong interest in science, math, and engineering, applicants need to be U.S. citizens. Because space is limited to 10 students, acceptance into the program will be based on several competitive criteria that include strong performance on the math placement test.

To recruit eligible students, NMC will enlist the assistance of high school principals and

counselors. Interested applicants are also asked to contact the NMC Sciences, Mathematics, Health and Athletics Department at 670-234-3690 Ext. 1200 or 1205. (NMC)

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FDM live fire training on May 19-21

The Emergency Management Office, Office of the Governor, in conjunction with U.S. Naval Forces Marianas (N3) Guam, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial would like to inform the general public that the U.S. Military Unit would be conducting live fire training on the island of Farallon De Mendenilla. The schedule dates and time are as follow:

May 19 – 21, 2008 from 6am to 1am – Live Fire Training

The general location of this activity will be on the island of Farallon De Mendenilla Training Area (R7201) on a ten (10) nautical mile radius on all quadrants.

Due to the danger imposed by this activity, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial is advising the general public especially fishermen, commercial pilots and marine

tour operators to stay away from this area during the time and dates indicated.

The cooperation and understanding of the general public is greatly appreciated.

Should you have any ques-

tions, please do not hesitate to contact the Emergency Management Office, Operations Section at telephone numbers 322-9528 and 322-9529, VHF MARINE CHNL 16, and HF Single Side Band Radio on 5.205.0. (PR)

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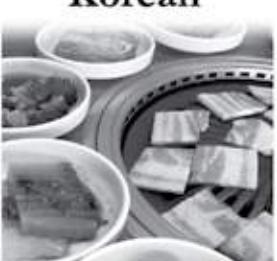
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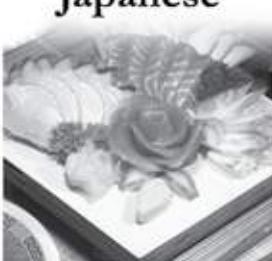
MONDAY

Korean



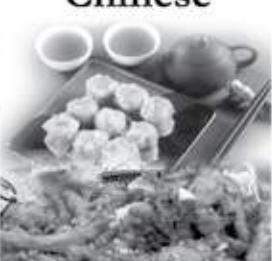
TUESDAY

Japanese



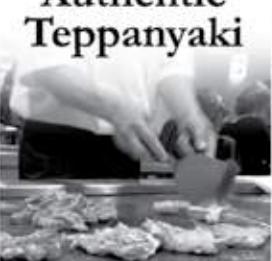
WEDNESDAY

Chinese



THURSDAY

Authentic
Teppanyaki



FRIDAY

Seafood



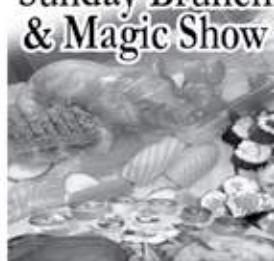
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China currently has 100 cities that have over a million people

From Page 1

"China will be a huge travel market in the future. And Continental Micronesia wants to be a player in that market," said Dias.

He reported that the carrier had succeeded in getting Guam and the Northern Marianas excluded from the frequency cap provision in the U.S.-China aviation treaty signed last year. Under the treaty, Continental Micronesia can operate an unlimited number of flights from

any three Chinese cities, except Beijing and Shanghai.

Dias said the airline company is now reviewing where the best opportunities would be.

"There are fantastic opportunities. If you look at cities in China, at the very minimum, there are 100 cities right now that have over a million people. To put that in context, in the United States, there are only nine cities with over a million people."

"Of course, a lot of the cities may not have the large economy to be able to support flights.

Maybe the people do not make enough income to afford a vacation to Micronesia. But some of those cities outside of Beijing and Shanghai, I think, do. That's what we're going to concentrate on looking at over the next couple of years," he said.

He added that efforts are also being made to market Micronesian destinations to business travelers who use existing Continental flights between New York and Beijing.

Continental Micronesia marked its 40th anniversary on

Friday, May 16, 2008. A simple ceremony was held at the Saipan International Airport to commemorate the inaugural flight of Air Mike, as the airline was called then, from Saipan's Kobler Field to Honolulu on a Boeing 727-100 jet known as Ju Ju.

Airline official Wally Dias said that plans are underway to bring Continental flights from China to Micronesia.

Currently, the airline offers regular nonstop service to Saipan from Guam and Manila, and charter flights from Japan to Rota.



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Lt. Gov. Tim P. Villagomez, Senate President Pete P. Reyes, Marianas Visitors Authority's board of directors chair Jerry Tan, MVA managing director Perry Tenorio, CPA acting executive director Lee Cabrera, and Continental Airlines staff gather for a photo during Friday's celebration of Continental Micronesia's 40th anniversary as the leading airline in the Pacific inside the conference room of Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Dignitaries and Continental Airlines staff gather during Friday's celebration of Continental Micronesia's 40th anniversary as the leading airline in the Pacific inside the conference room of Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport.

Oil price forecast for the second half of the year up from \$107 previously to \$141 a barrel

From Page 1

And traders were equally unimpressed by the U.S. government's plan to stop adding to the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.

One day, two moves designed to allay concerns about an overheated oil market that's squeezing motorists and inflating the prices of all sorts of goods.

The response in the oil trading pits? Traders did what they've been doing for months now, and pushed crude oil and gasoline futures to new highs.

"All in all, we're seeing another strong move here on little fundamental news," said Jim Ritterbusch, president of Ritterbusch & Associates, an oil trading advisory firm in Galena, Ill.

The reason for the disconnect has little to do with political decisions in Washington or Riyadh, and everything to do with market expectations. The Saudi production increase was seen in the market as minuscule, and no one expected the suspension of shipments to the U.S. government's Strategic Petroleum Reserve to have much impact on supplies.

Even more important, the traders placing the bets expect prices to just keep moving higher.

Goldman Sachs, one of the world's most influential investment banks, underscored that sentiment Friday when it hiked its oil price forecast for the second half of the year to \$141 a barrel, up from \$107 previously.

Analysts at the bank argue that the oil market is undergoing a "structural repricing" that will continue to play out for some time to come.

"We would view any pull-back in oil, regardless of the size or duration—although a correction could be as large as 15 percent—as an opportunity to re-establish long positions in oil before the summer," Goldman Sachs advised traders.

Translation: Buy when barrels go on sale, because prices are bound to keep heading higher.

And buy they did Friday. The price for a barrel of benchmark light, sweet crude for June delivery jumped \$2.17 to settle at record close of \$126.29 on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Earlier in the session, prices surged to \$127.82 a barrel, also a new high.

It was the eighth time in the past 10 sessions traders rewrote the record books, and the first time prices topped \$127 a barrel.

Investors shrugged off the news from Saudi Oil Minister Ali al-Naimi that the world's largest oil producer had decided to increase production last week. The market also had little reaction to the Energy Department's announcement said it would cancel shipments into the Strategic Petroleum Reserve for six months beginning July 1.

"It's ridiculous because I don't think this is going to bring the price down," said Phil Flynn, an analyst at Alaron Trading

Corp., of the Energy Department's move.

The effect of Saudi Arabia's decision was also not clear. The increase, which went into effect last Saturday, is relatively small, lifting total output from the world's leading producer to 9.45 million barrels per day by June.

The addition of "300,000 barrels won't make a lot of difference," said Mir Yousufuddin, who monitors crude prices for the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

The announcement came during a visit by Bush, who was in the kingdom to appeal for a more significant increase in production. Bernard Picchi, an energy analyst at research firm Wall Street Access, called the increase "a token amount" and said the effect on prices would have been different if Saudi Arabia had boosted production by 1 million or 1.5 million barrels a day.

Saudi Arabia often adjusts its output to meet demand, and the increase coincides with the start of the peak driving season in the U.S. The Middle Eastern nation has in the past acknowledged the ability to produce as much as 11 million barrels a day.

James Cordier, president of Liberty Trading Group in Tampa, Fla., agreed that the moves by both the U.S. and Saudi Arabia were "insignificant" and would do little to dent the rally in oil prices. Like a number of other analysts, he believes pric-

es are rising not because of a speculative bubble, but simply reflect finite supply and soaring global demand.

Crude's latest surge comes a week before the Memorial Day holiday, the traditional start of the summer driving season, suggesting that retail gas prices still have further to rise. Motorists are now paying a national average of \$3.787 a gallon for regular gasoline, up nearly a penny from the previous day, according to AAA and the Oil Price Information Service.

Diesel prices also have risen to record levels, meaning that even Americans who don't drive will likely face even higher prices on all sorts of goods because of increased shipping costs. A gallon of diesel now sells for \$4.482 a gallon.

Oil prices could rise even higher as U.S. demand picks up during the summer months, when gasoline consumption is typically the heaviest. Traders are clearly betting gasoline prices have a way to go too: Gasoline futures jumped to a record \$3.2438 a gallon on the Nymex before easing slightly to settle at \$3.2235, up 5.777 cents.

In other Nymex trading, heating oil futures rose 8.04 cents to settle at \$3.7028 a gallon. Natural gas futures fell 30.5 cents to settle at \$11.094 per 1,000 cubic feet.

In London, July Brent crude surged \$2.36 to settle at \$124.99 a barrel on the ICE Futures exchange.

MVA thanks KNT for operating charter flights to Rota

From Page 1

On the third day of the tour, the group returned to Saipan and visited the main tourist sites on the island.

"Although it was very short stay, it was the good opportunity for them to know well about Rota and Saipan," according to Pacific Development Inc., which is helping to promote KNT's charter flights.

MVA, Hafadai Beach Hotel, Rota Resort & Country Club, and PDI offered support for the familiarization tour.

Northwest Airlines operates daily service between Kansai International Airport, which serves the Osaka area. Continental Airlines is set to introduce three charter flights to Rota in August and October. (Agnes E. Donato)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas Visitors Authority board of director Edward Maratita thanked KNT for operating charter flights to Rota.

Economic stimulus payment FAQs

Following are answers to some of the most commonly asked questions regarding the economic stimulus payments. The Saipan Tribune will be publishing these FAQs as a series.

Q. How will members of the armed forces receive their stimulus payments?

A. Members of the armed forces will need to file a 2007 income tax return to receive the stimulus payment. [New 4/11/08]

Q. Will military personnel stationed in a combat zone get an automatic extension to file?

A. Combat zone personnel are allotted an automatic extension to file their returns. However, if they wish to receive the economic stimulus payments, they must file their 2007 income tax returns in time for the IRS to process them before the end of the year. To ensure that a stimulus payment can be made this year, the return should be filed no later than Oct. 15. [New 4/11/08]

Q. Am I entitled to the business portion of the stimulus package even if my adjusted gross income exceeds the threshold that phases out the basic credit?

A. The individual and business parts of the legislation are separate and have different qualifications. [New 4/14/08]

Q. What types of acquisitions will qualify for the 50% depreciation deduction? I am specifically wondering if farm buildings will qualify for this accelerated depreciation.

A. To qualify for this deduction, property must have a recovery period of 20 years or less. Farm buildings normally qualify since they have a general depreciation recovery period of 20 years. The alternative recovery period of 25 years does not have to be considered unless the property is required to be depreciated under the Alternative Depreciation System. [New 4/14/08]

Source: Internal Revenue Service (www.irs.gov)

Garapan Elementary School registration information

Garapan Elementary School would like to announce the continuation of registration for Kindergarten students. Ongoing Kindergarten registration will take place in the main office daily between the hours of 7am- 9:30am and 1pm to 2pm. Kindergarten students must be five years of age on or before the end of August 31, 2008.

New student registration must be six years of age on or before the end of August 2008. Please be sure to bring copies of all your documents. GES charges a twenty-five cent fee per copy requested.

6th grade transitioning students who will be ongoing to Hopwood Jr. High School will be receiving transition packets. These must be completed and submitted to their 6th grade teacher by May 23, 2008. After this date, parents will be required to register directly at the Hopwood Jr. High School. If your child will not be attending Hopwood Jr. High School, a parent/ guardian must come to the office to complete a withdrawal/ transfer out form. If the form is not completed, the school cannot release any academic information to the re-

*For new students only

For more information please call Garapan Elementary School at 237-3314 or email questions to garapan.school@gmail.com. (PR)

MHS Class of 1988 meeting on June 5

The Marianas High School Class of 1988 will have a meeting again on June 5, 2008, 6:30pm at the residence of Melvin and Eleanor Cepeda in As Lito, behind Saipan International School.

It was decided on Thursday,



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Opinion

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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EDITORIAL

Marriage for all

Marriage," the U.S. Supreme Court ruled more than 40 years ago, "is one of the 'basic civil rights of man,' fundamental to our very existence and survival." And yet that right has been routinely denied to American men and women based on their sexual orientation. Government, which at its best acts to protect and extend the rights of its citizens, instead has long stood as an impediment to gay men and lesbians who just want to marry the one they love.

When it acted in 1967, the court banished laws that forbade interracial marriage and legalized the union of Mildred Loving, a black woman, and her white husband. In that same noble tradition, California's high court on Thursday ended the state's ban on marriages between couples of the same sex. Marriage, the court ruled, is "one of the fundamental rights embodied in the California Constitution" and may not be sublimated to bigotry or habit.

With its elaborate, careful ruling, the court cut neatly through the argument that gay and lesbian couples already enjoy the equal protection required by the state Constitution through civil unions that carry virtually the same rights. The very creation of a separate-but-nearly-equal category draws a distinction between marriage and civil unions, implying a lesser status for the latter, Chief Justice Ronald M. George wrote. Preserving marriage as an exclusive category, he wrote, "is likely to cast doubt on whether the official family relationship of same-sex couples enjoys dignity equal to that of opposite-sex couples."

Far from evincing judicial activism, the ruling titled simply "In re Marriage Cases" acknowledged both legal and home truths. Tradition often stands as an obstacle to eliminating discriminatory institutions. But the court recognized that rights must supersede customs, that just because marriage traditionally has been defined as a union between a man and a woman, it cannot be denied to same-sex couples by "tradition alone."

Those offended by gay marriage already are working for a measure that would let California voters consider a constitutional amendment to ban it—and, in the process, overturn this ruling. The measure is planned for the November ballot. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has said he would oppose a ban, and his leadership on this matter is warmly welcomed. Public opinion has changed in this state since Proposition 22 prohibited same-sex marriage in 2000, and it continues to evolve toward acceptance of gay and lesbian rights. Thursday's ruling is another step in that march toward equality; voters would do well to revel in this historic moment and let this decision stand.

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Star Trix Nix Pix

While I was interviewing Jason Bateman for the cover of Best Life magazine, we stopped at a car wash because Bateman's definition of "best life" is pretty liberal. As we were leaving, we spotted a guy hiding behind an SUV taking photos with a telephoto lens. Of Jason Bateman. At a car wash. The next day, a blog ran photos of us under the provocative headline, "Guess Who Sneezed?" The sad thing is, he was actually blowing his nose. Paparazzi have no respect for the facts.

The paparazzi have become so pervasive across L.A. that last week the mayor of Malibu asked Ken Starr, Pepperdine law school dean and former Clinton tormentor, to help draw up a city ordinance to restrict them. Earlier this year, Los Angeles City Councilman Dennis Zine proposed an ordinance to prevent paparazzi from getting too close to famous people. Both efforts have minimal chance of accomplishing their obvious goal—getting celebrities to hang out with low-level local politicians—and absolutely no chance of resulting in laws because even TMZ.com has press-freedom rights.

So, in a feat of public service that I hope will win me the kind of awards, appreciation and movie deals that Steve Lopez gets, I've decided to help the celebrities. I called paparazzo Garry Sun, who makes more than \$8,000 a month selling to magazines and TV shows, for some tips on how to avoid him. You don't need to thank me, celebrities. That movie deal will be thanks enough.

Don't go to the Ivy restaurant for lunch: Sure, the Cobb salad is good—but are you completely unable to find a salad at a less tourist-packed, paparazzi-stalked joint? If you're going to the Ivy for lunch, you want your photo taken. This is the place where Melanie Griffith went with sudden-friend Sharon Stone last week in what will rank as the most desperate plea for sexual attention from a 50-something until whatever Kim Cattrall does in the "Sex and the City" movie.

In fact, stay off Robertson Boulevard: Also, says Sun, don't step foot in downtown Beverly Hills. "And Hollywood, West Hollywood and Malibu. Then you've effectively cut your chance of getting shot by 90 percent." To simplify: Don't hang out with other celebrities.

Go out early: Do your errands before 11 a.m. because, as you know if you've ever seen paparazzi, there's no way they're awake before 11. And make dinner reservations before 8, because there's a window between 5 and 8 p.m. when they're doing their equivalent of office work: uploading video, sending photos, killing puppies.

By JOEL STEIN

Special to the Los Angeles Times

Stein is a columnist for the Times. E-mail Stein at jstein@latimescolumnists.com



Go solo: "Any time you're seen with a new person, it's news. Regardless or whether you're dating, they'll run a story wondering if you are or not." The definition of news has been lowered so far that you should also avoid new haircuts, new lipstick and new British accents.

Close your eyes: As soon as you see a flash go off, remove your sunglasses and shut your eyes. "Magazines want eyes," Sun says. This trick does not work for Pamela Anderson.

Hire security: David and Victoria Beckham, as well as Tom Cruise and Katie Holmes, are among the hardest celebrities to get pictures of. The Beckhams travel with a phalanx of SUVs that block the view of restaurant entrances. Cruise's SUV has a dividing wall and window curtains. Also, he can melt film with his mind.

Try decoys: The important part is the decoy car. "(Actress) Sienna Miller was leaving Villa, and they had the car she came in pull up to the side. And then she ran out the front into a different car," Sun says. He got fooled. But when Leonardo DiCaprio got a guy who looked like him to run out of a club with his hat pulled low, Leo-style, no one followed because they hadn't been primed with the decoy car. "Without the car, no one was ready," Sun says. "Very few times they will care enough to run after someone to see who it is." Another tip, apparently, is to run.

The same-clothes trick doesn't work: At the height of the Jen-Brad-Angelina scandal, Jennifer Aniston kept wearing the same outfit to deliberately bore magazine editors who couldn't confirm they were new shots. After the first "Harry Potter," Daniel Radcliffe did it too. Oh, those innocent times. Now, Sun says, "they'll still use the pictures, but they'll talk smack about you for wearing the same clothes over and over."

Wear a burka: Surprisingly warm on cool Malibu nights, yet well-ventilated for day.

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Hypocrisy on Hamas

If the recent exchanges between President Bush, Barack Obama and John McCain on Hamas and terrorism are a preview of the general election, we are in for an ugly six months. Despite his reputation in the media as a charming maverick, McCain has shown that he is also happy to use Nixon-style dirty campaign tactics. By charging recently that Hamas is rooting for an Obama victory, McCain tried to use guilt by association to suggest that Obama is weak on national security and won't stand up to terrorist organizations, or that, as Richard Nixon might have put it, Obama is soft on Israel.

President Bush picked up this theme Thursday. Without naming Obama during his speech Thursday night to Israel's Knesset, Bush suggested that Democrats want to "negotiate with terrorists" while Republicans want to fight terrorists.

The Obama campaign was right to criticize the president for his remarks and for engaging in partisan politics while overseas. Many presidents have said things abroad that could be construed as violating this unwritten rule of American politics. But it is hard to remember any president abusing the prestige of his office in as crude a way as Bush did Thursday. Charging your opponents with appeasement and likening them to Neville Chamberlain in the Knesset is a brutal blow. It is bad enough that Republicans use the politics of personal destruction here at home, but to deploy that kind of political weapon at an occasion as solemn as an American president addressing the

parliament of a friendly government marks a new low.

McCain, meanwhile, is guilty of hypocrisy. I am a supporter of Hillary Clinton and believe that she was right to say, about McCain's statement on Hamas, "I don't think that anybody should take that seriously." Unfortunately, the Republicans know that some people will. That's why they say such things.

But given his own position on Hamas, McCain is the last politician who should be attacking Obama. Two years ago, just after Hamas won the Palestinian parliamentary elections, I interviewed McCain for the British network Sky News's "World News Tonight" program. Here is the crucial part of our exchange:

I asked: "Do you think that American diplomats should be operating the way they have in the past, working with the Palestinian government if Hamas is now in charge?"

McCain answered: "They're the government; sooner or later we are going to have to deal with them, one way or another, and I understand why this administration and previous administrations had such antipathy towards Hamas because of their dedication to violence and the things that they not only espouse but practice, so ... but it's a new reality in the Middle East. I think the lesson is people want security and a decent life and decent future, that they want democracy. Fatah was not giving them that."

For some Europeans in Davos, Switzerland, where the interview took place, that's a perfectly reasonable answer. But it is an unusual

By JAMES P. RUBIN

Special to The Washington Post



The writer, an adjunct professor at Columbia University's School of International Affairs, was an assistant secretary of state and the State Department's chief spokesman during the Clinton administration.

if not unique response for an American politician from either party. And it is most certainly not how the newly conservative presumptive Republican nominee would reply today.

Given that exchange, the new John McCain might say that Hamas should be rooting for the old John McCain to win the presidential election. The old John McCain, it appears, was ready to do business with a Hamas-led government, while both Clinton and Obama have said that Hamas must change its policies toward Israel and terrorism before it can have diplomatic relations with the United States.

Even if McCain had not favored doing business with Hamas two years ago, he had no business smearing Barack Obama. But given his stated position then, it is either the height of hypocrisy or a case of political amnesia for McCain to inject Hamas into the American election.

The danger of fighting in

This has been a strange political year, particularly for a man who has been consumed by politics and governance for seven of his nine decades. I have read, watched, listened to and studied this campaign. I was impressed by the strength and breadth of our Democratic candidates and believed that the country would have been well served by the nomination of any of them. But over the past few, very contentious months, and especially in recent weeks, I have come to feel compelled to insert myself into the debate on behalf of the party to which I have devoted my life.

I understand the consequences of a bitter nomination fight that goes to the floor of a national convention. I became chairman of the Democratic National Committee in December 1972, just a month after our disastrous presidential defeat and five months after a brutal and divisive Democratic convention in Miami. I was elected to put the party back together. It was perhaps the most difficult task of my life.

The fissures and distrust that became manifest over the 1972 campaign took years to heal. Veterans of that battle may still carry some of the scars. If I have one more contribution to make to the Democratic Party, it is perhaps to help us avoid repeating past mistakes.

I have not been engaged with any candidate, nor will I be. Sens. Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama have waged brilliant campaigns organizationally, financially, programmatically and personally. Both should be exceedingly proud of what they have accomplished and how their debate has energized our great nation. America would be in good hands if either became president. But I am disturbed by the intensity of the debate, the longevity of the battle and the occasional personalization of the rhetoric. I love this country, and I love my

party. I know the stakes of this election and the consequences of both success and failure.

I remember Ronald Reagan's ultimate political question: "Are you better off now than you were?" It's painful to compare the United States today with what it was in 2000. On indicator after indicator, we have fallen backward. Under the last Democratic administration, we had huge budget surpluses; now we wallow in debt. Real income was growing; now it is shrinking. The price of energy was contained; now it is out of control. We were at peace; now we are in a two-front war that threatens to expand to Iran. Before, America was at the pinnacle of respect, power and influence around the world; now we are held in contempt, even by our closest historic allies. Above all, the sense of optimism that defined the American dream has been shattered. Eight out of 10 Americans are convinced that our nation is going in the wrong direction. If ever there was a time, indeed a demand, for change, it is now.

If the Democratic Party cannot win with this hand of cards, maybe we don't deserve to. We have to make fundamental decisions. No matter whom we supported in our nominating process, and with whatever intensity, we have to focus on how much we want to practice the policies that we preach and how much we want to change the direction of our country. The battle has lasted 15 months. Tens of millions have participated, including record numbers of new voters, and the amount of campaign contributions has been unprecedented. We all should be proud of what has been accomplished. But Democrats should also understand that prolonging our internal war seriously endangers our chance to recapture the presidency.

John McCain has had an easy time over the past few months as the presumptive Republican nominee. All through the prima-

ries, he never had to defend the disaster of the past eight years. McCain never had to play Republican defense. Simultaneously, however, the Democratic Party has been engaged in an epic war between two giants. McCain's best two months have coincided to the Democrats' worst two months. Despite this, we are beating McCain in the polls. I am convinced that he has seen his best days and his best numbers.

But that conviction is predicated on the Democratic Party shifting out of nominating mode. Our success depends on making this a debate between two parties, two visions and two generations of Americans — a plebiscite on the past vs. the future. The process has been played, and it has been played out.

Democrats should rally around our nominee as soon as possible so the general election campaign can begin and the contrast between John McCain and the Democratic Party can be drawn for the American people. Having put our party back together after the 1972 convention, I know that every week of delay tempts a hardening of irreconcilable differences. If we are to win for America, the Democratic Party has to unite now.

Letters to the Editor

Fear of the unknown

I had promised myself not to write anymore to your good office and just stand and watch things as they happen in our beloved CNMI.

But reading the articles of our dear friend Mr. Greg Cruz lately has made me want to just say my two cents worth without having anybody to write on my behalf.

We all know for a fact that S.2739 is now a Public Law and it does not

really take a rocket scientist to understand that there are a lot of phases that we will still have to go through before any "real" change is effected in the CNMI for all guest workers here.

My only concern is that why must Mr. Cruz continue his tirade of doing scare tactics on people and trying to segregate our community with "them versus us."

Those who have pending labor cases with NLRB, EEOC, U.S. Dept. of Labor, CNMI Labor and have been notified that you must depart the CNMI please email your name, contact number, case number, and a brief descrip-

tion of your case including date filed and any action taken to doromal@earthlink.net or jerrycustodio@yahoo.com or call 233-0752.

We want to help each other have equal protection of law and fair treatment in this

critical time. Please feel free to contact any member of the HUMAN DIGNITY MOVEMENT to coordinate, document, and report all labor and human rights abuses to our fellow workers.

Thank you for all your support to

process by UNCLE SAM ever since. (citizenship, foodstamps, basic services, etc.) given that you are a "U.S. CITIZEN".

Now having stated that fact, who are you to threaten other people who just want to live decent lives in a land that most of them now call also "home." Our kids, like yours are growing up in a very small community and they do not

need anyone who promotes racist behavior just to justify their existence. "I sense much fear in you. Fear leads to anger, anger leads to hate, hate leads to suffering." Let not your fear dictate what your mind and heart want to say. Peace be with you Mr. Cruz.

Brad Makabayan
Capital Hill

MAY JUSTICE REIGN IN THE CNMI! GOD BLESS AMERICA! GOD BLESS CNMI!

Jerry Custodio
Human Dignity Movement

A message to all nonresident workers

Those who have pending labor cases with NLRB, EEOC, U.S. Dept. of Labor, CNMI Labor and have been notified that you must depart the CNMI please email your name, contact number, case number, and a brief descrip-

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protection of law and fair treatment in this critical time. Please feel free to contact any member of the HUMAN DIGNITY MOVEMENT to coordinate, document, and report all labor and human rights abuses to our fellow workers.

Thank you for all your support to

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Partly cloudy. Southeast winds 5 to 10 mph.	Partly cloudy. Isolated light showers. Southeast winds around 10 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 85° ▼ 77°	▲ 86° ▼ 76°	▲ 84° ▼ 76°	▲ 85° ▼ 76°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲ 89 ▼ 77
Palau	Cloudy	▲ 87 ▼ 77
Yap	Partly Sunny	▲ 86 ▼ 77
Chuuk	T'Storms	▲ 88 ▼ 77
Pohnpei	T'Storms	▲ 81 ▼ 70
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 88 ▼ 74
Majuro	Cloudy	▲ 84 ▼ 73

Around The Globe

Auckland	Sunny	▲ 62 ▼ 47
Beijing	Sunny	▲ 75 ▼ 52
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲ 86 ▼ 75
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲ 86 ▼ 74
London	Partly Sunny	▲ 58 ▼ 46
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲ 85 ▼ 62
Manila	Cloudy	▲ 90 ▼ 79
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲ 63 ▼ 52
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲ 90 ▼ 76
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 64 ▼ 50
Osaka	Mostly Sunny	▲ 70 ▼ 60
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 59 ▼ 50
Pusan	Windy	▲ 67 ▼ 56
Rome	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 70 ▼ 55
Salem	Partly Sunny	▲ 84 ▼ 50
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲ 74 ▼ 53
Seoul	Rain	▲ 68 ▼ 50
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲ 72 ▼ 57
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲ 71 ▼ 53

Tides

Saipan Harbor	
12:28AM Today	Low Tide: 1.0 Feet
5:44AM Today	High Tide: 1.8 Feet
1:03PM Today	Low Tide: -0.1 Feet
7:55PM Today	High Tide: 1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Sunrise/Sunset		Moonrise/Moonset	
Today	5:48AM	6:39PM	Today
Monday	5:47AM	6:40PM	Monday
Tuesday	5:47AM	6:40PM	Tuesday
Wednesday	5:47AM	6:40PM	Wednesday
Thursday	5:47AM	6:41PM	Thursday

*Following Day

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

ISLAND SNAPSHOT

Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.

BUSINESS

Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.

SAMUT SARI

Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.

TRAVELOGUE

Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, CIC Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan.

To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana; MU: China Eastern

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF APRIL 8, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313 8:30am 9:05am 3,4,7

Saipan-Guam

CO 9317 4:00am 4:50am Daily

CO 9597 8:30am 9:20am 1,2,5,6

CO 9313 8:30am 10:00am 3,4,7 via Rota

CO 9601 12:30pm 1:20pm Daily

CO 9603 3:30pm 4:20pm Daily

CO 9605 6:30pm 7:20pm Daily

CO 9599 9:30pm 10:20pm Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 078 8:40am 2:00pm Daily via Nagoya

NW 075 4:45pm 7:25pm Daily Nagoya

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083 4:20pm 7:10pm Daily

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078 8:40am 11:25am Daily

Saipan-Manila

CO 895 4:45pm 6:35pm 6

CO 895 6:45pm 8:35pm 3

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604 2:20am 6:00am 1

OZ 604 2:50am 6:30am 2,3,4,5,6,7

OZ 606 3:30pm 7:00pm 2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608 3:50am 7:20am 1,4,5,7

Guam-Manila

CO 891 6:00am 10:30am 3 via Yap

and Koror

CO 893 6:30am 8:05am 6

CO 893 8:25am 10:00am 2,7

CO 893 5:50pm 9:10pm 5 via Koror

CO 933 7:00pm 8:40pm Daily

PR 111 6:00am 7:45am 1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Guangzhou

CZ 3008 5:00am 8:00am 2,6

Guangzhou-Guam

CO 909 6:40pm 9:25pm 1,5

Guam-Rota

CO 9598 10:15am 10:45am 1,2,6

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FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline ETD ETA Frequency

Guam-Rota

FRE 113 11:40am 11:50am Daily

FRE 115 1:00pm 1:10pm Daily

FRE 117 2:30pm 2:40pm Daily

FRE 119 4:00pm 4:10pm Daily

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral

Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center

Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish

Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish

Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish

Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish

Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota

Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota

Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish

Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish

Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish

Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios

Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad

Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan

Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8:10:30pm

Saturday Tagalog Service: 8:10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7:30pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan

Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan

Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm

Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan

Worship/Study Opportunities

Adult Sunday School: 9am

Youth Sunday School: 9am

English Worship Service Sunday: 10am

Sunday Service: 5:30pm

Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm

Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30/7:30pm

Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;

Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm

Mid-week Service: 7:30pm

Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm

Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30pm

Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan

St. Paul's Episcopal Church

Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am

Place: Vicarage, Chalan Lalau,

Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan

Worship Service: 9am

GBI Classes: 4-6pm

Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am

Sunday: 7am

Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm

Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan

Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)

Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)

Saturday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45pm (Tagalog)

Sunday: 6:45am (English)

Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Koblerville

Sunday Services

9:00 AM

Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158

Pastor JJ Matsumoto

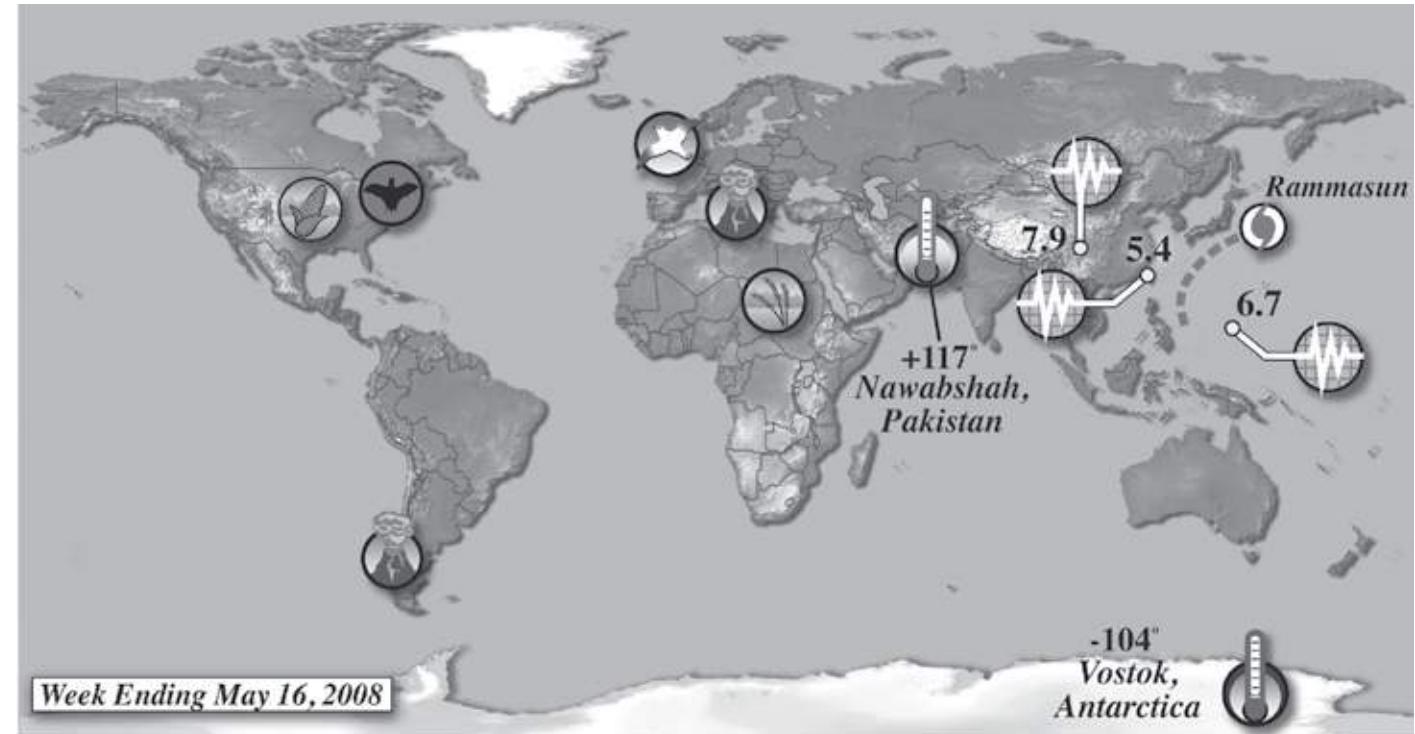
Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)

Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal

8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)

Earthweek: A Diary of the Planet

By STEVE NEWMAN



Week Ending May 16, 2008

Bat Death Mystery

 Wildlife and conservation officials throughout the United States have been advised to be on the alert for a mysterious ailment that has killed thousands of bats over the past four months in caves and mines across the Northeast. The U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) National Wildlife Health Center in Wisconsin has examined nearly 100 bat carcasses from the affected region. Researchers there say they have been unable to determine exactly why the bats died of "white-nose syndrome"—a term used because of an overgrowth of a fungus normally present in the flying mammals but found covering large areas of the dead bats, including around their noses. The excessive fungus is believed to be merely a sign of overall poor health rather than a primary cause of the deaths. The USGS biologists say they have found that most of the dead bats were emaciated, with some exhibiting changes in their lungs that are difficult to explain.

Warming Crop Losses

 Climate change is expected to lower Earth's potential for growing crops more than 15 percent by the 2080s, according to a new World Bank report. The Little Green Data Book 2008 warns that developing countries will bear the brunt of the adverse effects of global warming with a nearly 20 percent drop in agricultural productivity, compared to a 6 percent drop to be suffered by industrialized nations. It adds that as agriculture delivers lower yields, food prices will rise even higher than the recent jump, while levels of malnutrition and related human diseases also increase. Impacts will be the most acute in Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

Woman sentenced for having son dress up as Scout

EASTON, Pa. (AP)—A former Bethlehem woman will serve up to 23 months in prison for having her 7-year-old son dress as a Cub Scout to collect money for a nonexistent cause. Sally Ann Gombocz, 51, told a Northampton County judge she wanted to apologize to anyone she hurt. She previously pleaded guilty to theft by deception and corruption of a minor. Gombocz had her son dress as a scout in 2003 and tell people he was raising money for a camping trip. A prosecutor says the family collected \$69. Gombocz was sentenced Friday to six to 23 months in the county jail.

Half-eaten Snickers bar implicates hungry burglar

JONESBORO, Ark. (AP)—Police say DNA found on a half-eaten candy bar helped them zero in on a robbery suspect. Detective Jason Simpkins says Brian D. Bass' DNA matched the sample found on the bar left on the counter at Cato Animal Hospital during a January robbery.

Berry. Bass was being held in jail Friday on \$50,000 bond. Bass was on probation after he served time on a firearms possession charge. Simpkins said the state had his DNA on file. Police say Bass is facing felony commercial burglary and theft charges.

Parents want to flush N.C. school's potty policy

BURGAW, N.C. (AP)—Going potty without a partner can lead to punishment for students at a Burgaw elementary school, but parents want the policy flushed. The Star-News of Wilmington reported that students at Malpass Corner Elementary School can't use the bathroom alone because of an ongoing graffiti problem. A letter to parents from the principal says students can go to the bathroom as a class or in pairs. Students who go to the bathroom when they aren't supposed to are punished with a silent lunch. They must sit at a table and eat lunch alone without talking. Parent Jaime Whitmore describes the policy as "cruel and unusual punishment."

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Good Housekeeping

Rock gardens, solid against the storms

By ADRIAN HIGGINS
(C) 2008, THE WASHINGTON POST

There are all sorts of practical reasons to try your hand at rock gardening, which is not the cultivation of stones but the placement of dry-loving plants in beds deep in grit and gravel.

Such a garden can flourish without mulch, mowing or pesticides and needs little feeding and weeding. It's an ideal horticultural art form for people who travel a lot or don't want to spend the whole weekend playing in the dirt. And because the rock garden is free-draining and mulched with gravel, it is inherently equipped to handle the gully washers we saw this week.

But those attributes are not the reason I am growing fonder of a form of gardening I used to

A two-person household is responsible for releasing **41,500 pounds** of CO₂ into the atmosphere each year.

To offset that, each household would have to plant **483 trees** and let them grow for **10 years**.

think of as staid and ill-suited to the Washington climate.

No, it's the plants. Consider the beauties that thrive in an arid setting. Pinks—so much lovelier than their ungainly kin, carnations—are now a thicket of stems capped with starlike blossoms in pink, white and red. After

flowering they revert to cushions of blue-gray, huddled against the drying winds. Spanish lavender, once considered unreliable in Washington's climate, seems tough as nails in a rock garden and is marked by a conelike flower topped with violet tufts.

The more you probe this rocky world the more obscure and captivating is the flora. In late spring, plants are transformed into bloom. Take the *Delosperma nubigenum*, a creature with low, tiny sausagelike leaves and now topped with bright yellow daisies. I am smitten by another composite now in flower, the *Atlas daisy*, *Anacyclus depressus*. From flat, feathery leaves, stalks appear in the spring to bear daisies with white petals around a yellow boss. The underside of the petals is striped red, and the effect is mesmerizing.

Here's another rare beauty doing its thing this week: *Asphodelus albus*. It looks like a small but soft yucca, with a central flower spike whose pink flowers open and close daily, turning from tubes to stars after the sun passes its zenith. It is a lily relative from the Mediterranean.

Most of these plants are small. Indeed a big plant would look unnatural in a rock garden setting; that's why rock garden fans stick in slow-growing dwarf conifers as a foil to the perennial flowers and diminutive ground covers such as Elfin thyme and



various stonecrops.

These plants have evolved as deep-rooted compact plants, reaching down for scant water and huddled against the constant

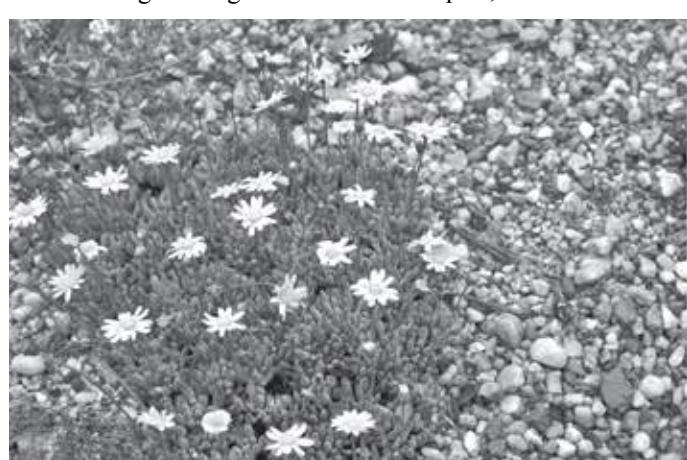
wind of their native arid and mountainous habitats. What they can't stand is clay soil and wood mulches; the crowns would rot in a heartbeat, especially in winter.

Thus, you must create something of a moonscape for them. The beauty of these otherworldly gardens is that you can do it on a tiny scale, in homemade troughs or around your entire property.

Holly Downen, a seasonal gardener at Green Spring Gardens near Annandale, Va., recently made two troughs to replace old ones that were crumbling. Essentially, you take a form of some kind; she uses foam sheeting nailed together, but a cheap plastic basin would work. She then takes Portland cement, peat moss and perlite and mixes them dry. Then she adds water, mixes them again and adds nylon fibers to reinforce the mix. The concoction is poured into the mold, where the sides are formed by hand and allowed to set. The trough is wrapped in plastic to cure slowly over three weeks and then left for at least two more weeks for most of the lime to leach out, for the sake of the plants.

Downen puts a base of gravel in the troughs, which must have drainage holes, and then builds a growing mix that consists mostly of grit, sand, potting mix and more perlite. Young plants are watered to get established, but then thrive on neglect. She plants the troughs with dwarf conifers, stonecrops, sempervivums, thyme species and scutellarias, among others.

Her so-called hypertufa troughs



WASHINGTON POST

There are all sorts of practical reasons to try your hand at rock gardening. *Delosperma nubigenum* in an Alexandria, Va., rock garden.

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See ROCK on next page

(they mimic a porous stone called tufa) are about 18 inches by 30 inches and eight inches deep, an area large enough for an entire microcosmic garden.

Michael Bordelon is living proof that you can turn your yard into a trough garden, even if his gravel garden is not where he lives, but where he works. A plant collections manager at the Smithsonian Institution's botany greenhouse in Suitland, Md., he was fed up with the landscape crews kicking up stones and breaking the windows when they mowed the grass around the greenhouse.

Twelve years ago, he fixed the problem by removing the turf, creating berms of compost and smothering two sides of the greenhouse with more than 40 tons of river bank gravel. The traditional

delineation between path and bed doesn't really exist here, so plants can grow and retreat through the year without creating the obvious holes in a traditional garden bed of soil and mulch.

Here, an orange-tan aggregate



WASHINGTON POST

An American holly tree traps 229 pounds of carbon per year.

is his mulch, and while the initial installation was a big job, he no longer has to worry about the recurring cost and labor of spreading organic mulch or of watering. Part of the 3,000-square-foot garden incorporates a gully, dry

when sunny, but a fast-moving stream when it rains.

There is whimsy here. A berm is crowned by a Japanese garden juniper that has been trained to look like an octopus (complete with eyeballs), and other common plants grow alongside the rock garden oddities. A few shrubs and trees provide structure, including a Japanese apricot and several redbud trees, which one thinks of as wanting a forest leaf mulch but are clearly happy tapping into what's below the gravel.

I love the way the pinks have multiplied, crossed with themselves and produced new seedlings. There are stands of a violet-purple variety of the prairie phlox (*Phlox pilosa*) that is as fragrant as it is vibrant. Smaller, mounding phloxes cover other parts of the



WASHINGTON POST

In the author's garden, a young black gum tree sequesters 57 pounds of carbon annually. When it reaches maturity, it will capture about 1,000 pounds a year.

garden, as does a neat ground-hugging perennial with variegated leaves and snapdragon-like flowers. It's called *Asarina procumbens*. Then there's the *Veronica Waterperry Blue*, now ablaze in pale blue blossoms.

And did we mention the *Arabis procurrens*, or the *Gypsophylla* repens or the *Agastache rupestris*?

Who knew that such an unyielding environment could present so many beautiful and interesting plants? At last, I'm proud to say, I've got rocks in my head, if not yet in my own garden.

Find rock garden plants at

local independent garden centers and online at High Country Gardens, 800-925-9387, www.highcountrygardens.com; Arrowhead Alpines, 517-223-3581, www.arrowheadalpines.com; and Mesa Garden, e-mail cactus@swep.com, www.mesagarden.com.



COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION



INVITATION TO BID NMHC ITB-08-010

This ad is paid for with HUD funds.

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Timothy P. Villagomez, through the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, hereby give notice that NMHC is soliciting sealed bids for the **LANDSCAPING OF THE NORTHERN MARIANAS JAPAN CULTURAL CENTER** in Garapan, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Interested individuals or firms may pick up a copy of the Project Package beginning Wednesday, May 14, 2008, at the NMHC Central Office in Garapan, Saipan, during regular working hours (7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) Monday thru Friday except CNMI and austerity holidays. A non-refundable payment of Seventy Five dollars (\$75.00) is required for each set. Payment shall be by money order or cashier's check (payable to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation).

Bidders are advised that this project is subject to compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act and the labor standard provisions for wage rate determination of the Commonwealth. All labor on the project shall be paid no less than the minimum wage rate of \$3.55 per hour which took effect on July 25, 2007 as established by U.S. law. Bidders are further advised to participate the increase of \$.50 per hour that is scheduled to take effect on May 26, 2008.

A mandatory pre-bid conference will be held at **10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2008**, at the Northern Marianas Japan Cultural Center in Garapan, Saipan next to the Garapan Central Park, and all interested bidders will be given the opportunity to walk through the proposed project site, familiarize themselves with the required work and ask questions regarding the project. Attendance at this conference and site visit are considered essential to the bidders' understanding of the project elements and a company that does not have a representative in attendance at the pre-bid conference will be considered as a non-responsive bidder.

Sealed Bids must be marked **NMHC ITB-08-010**. For bidders within the CNMI, an original and three (3) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director, Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than **10:00 a.m., local time, May 29, 2008**. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m., local time, May 29, 2008 and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515 or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside of the CNMI, an original and three (3) copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U. S. Postal Service or the official government postal service no later than May 29, 2008 AND must be received by Procurement and Supply no later than June 9, 2008. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read aloud at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m. local time, June 10, 2008. However, if no Notices of Intent to Bid are received from bidders outside of the CNMI, the bids will be opened at 10:30 a.m., local time, May 29, 2008.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00), a bid security of fifteen percent (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. This security may be in the form of a Certified Check, Cashier's Check, or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC), with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Landscaping of the NM Japan Cultural Center". Surety companies must hold a Certificate of Authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General.

Bidding procedures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, however, Article 7, "Local Business Preference" is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funding for this project.

The bidder submitting the lowest responsible bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with NMHC and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment Bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price. Pursuant to Governor's Directive 251 dated March 15, 2006, bidders are required to include a Clearance from the Office of the Insurance Commissioner with respect to the financial bonding capability of the bidders' chosen Surety.

Performance time for completion of this project is forty-five (45) calendar days. Liquidated damages will be assessed at One Hundred Dollars (US\$100.00) per calendar day for delays beyond the established completion date.

This project is funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires recipients of HUD funds and the contractors to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these HUD funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible."

NMHC hereby notifies bidders that it will affirmatively insure that in any contract entered into pursuant to this advertisement, women and small business enterprises will be afforded full opportunity to submit proposals and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, national origin, political affiliation, creed, sex, religion, age, familial status, and disability status.

All documents received shall be the sole property of the NMHC with the exception of the Bid Bond, Certified Check, or Cashier's Check, which will be returned to the proposers after the acceptance and award of contract to the successful contractor.

The Government reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any defects in the said proposals, if in the sole opinion of NMHC, to do so would be in its best interest. All proposals will become the property of the Government.



U.S. PROBATION OFFICE DISTRICTS OF GUAM AND THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY Vacancy Announcement No: GUP 08-001



Position Title:
Type of Appointment:

Probation Support Specialist
Part-Time Temporary Indefinite

(may be converted to Full-Time in the future)

Court Personnel System - Grade CL-24

\$28,806 to \$46,866 per annum plus 25% COLA

All Sources

May 18, 2008

June 6, 2008 (close of business - 5pm)

Location of Vacancy: **Saipan (Part-Time)**

Position Overview

The Probation Support Specialist provides administrative, clerical and operations support to Probation Officers and Management staff for the U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services Office in the Districts of the Northern Mariana Islands and Guam. Work is performed under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Officer Specialist and the Chief U.S. Probation Officer or designee.

Representative Duties and Responsibilities (summarized)

The duties and responsibilities include, but not limited to: 1) formatting, typing, editing and finalizing reports prepared by Probation Officers, and prepares letters, memoranda, forms and routine correspondence for Probation Officers; 2) assisting Probation Officers in managing their caseloads by performing a variety of operations tasks for supervision and investigation activities; 3) Entering client data into electronic databases and makes entries into chronological records in supervision case files; 4) Conducting criminal record checks and investigations through local and national law enforcement files and databases; 5) Processing incoming fine and restitution receipts and maintains statement balances in case files, and similarly with community service hours and urinalysis log results; 6) Providing general clerical and office support by performing a variety of administrative, clerical and operations tasks; and 7) Performs other duties as assigned.

Minimum Qualifications

This position requires the following: 1) High school diploma, or the equivalent, and a minimum of two years of general experience and one year of specialized experience. General experience is progressively responsible clerical, office, or work that indicates the possession of, or the ability to acquire, the particular knowledge and skills needed to perform the duties of the position. Specialized experience is progressively responsible clerical or administrative experience requiring the regular and recurring application of clerical procedures involving the routine use of keyboard skills and use of specialized terminology, and demonstrated ability to apply a body of rules, regulations, directives, or laws. Specialized experience includes work in, or closely related to, the work of the Probation Support Specialist. Education above the high school level in accredited institutions may be substituted for the general experience on the basis of one academic year equals nine months of experience. Applicant must be a U.S. Citizen or eligible to work in the United States.

Other Requirements

This position requires the proficiency in the use of personal computers to include the ability to type 40 words per minute; working knowledge of Microsoft Windows XP™ or higher, WordPerfect 9™ or higher, and Internet browsers; strong organizational, writing, and verbal communication skills to include a good knowledge of spelling, punctuation, and grammatical usage; and ability to work well with a wide variety of people with diverse backgrounds.

Conditions of Employment

This position falls within the Judicial Branch of the U.S. Government and includes most federal government benefits, which is dependent upon full-time or part-time employment status. Employees are required to adhere to the Judicial Code of Conduct, which is available upon request. The final candidate will undergo a criminal background investigation and fingerprint check. Employees are Excepted Service ("at will") employees and serve at the pleasure of the Court. This position is subject to mandatory participation in Electronic Fund Transfer for payroll deposit.

Application Procedure

Qualified applicants must submit an original and two copies of each of the following: 1) letter of interest, 2) resume with 3 personal references, and 3) a completed AO 78 (Application for Employment) to:

Vacancy Announcement GUP 08-001

Rossanna Villagomez-Aguon
Chief U.S. Probation Officer
U.S. Probation Office - District of the Northern Mariana Islands
P.O. Box 502089
4th Floor Horiguchi Bldg., Rm. 4D, Garapan
Saipan, MP 96950
671-473-9201 (Guam office)

A copy of this announcement and the AO 78 (Application for Employment) are available at the U.S. Probation Office or on the United States Courts website at <http://www.uscourts.gov/employment.html>.

All application documents must be received at the U.S. Probation Office address above no later than Friday, June 6, 2008, at 5:00 p.m. Applications will not be accepted via email or facsimile. Untimely applications will not be considered. The most qualified applicants will be invited to, and must be physically present for, a personal interview. Such applicants may be subject to a computer proficiency test. Travel expenses and relocation expenses will not be reimbursed. All application information will be subject to verification.

The U.S. Probation Office is an Equal Opportunity Employer

The Good Life

The Russian is coming—and she's 15

By BOOTH MOORE
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—She struts into the Ivy with leg to spare and a long ponytail swinging behind her. She's working a super short, silver polka-dot dress, which she designed herself, and some seriously gooey lip gloss. She's got a makeup artist in tow, along with two publicists and a body guard who's not afraid to stand down a local crazy roller dancer.

Is it Paris? Miley? Ivanka?

No, it's Kira Plastinina, a 15-year-old Russian fashion designer, and if everything goes as planned, she's going to be the next "it" girl.

"When I was really little, people asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up," she says, ordering a plate of spaghetti and meatballs. "First I said a princess, then I said a fashion designer. I'm not grown up, but I am a fashion designer!"

Unlike the sorority of "it" girls before her who seemed to pop into the spotlight fully formed, Plastinina is a phenom in progress. She's just in from Russia, where in the last year she opened 40 stores bankrolled by her millionaire daddy. Six months ago, she had a fashion show with Paris Hilton in the front row. She's generating buzz on Moscow red carpets. And she's already had three Women's Wear Daily stories, and Teen Vogue is calling her a "teen tycoon" and "the talk of the town in her homeland."

Her first U.S. store opened in New York last week. Five more are on the way this month in Los Angeles, including a store opening Friday. In the U.S., the goal is 50 Kira Plastinina stores in the next three years, and eventually 250. New York Fashion Week is also in the designer's sights.

Part of the first, post-Communist generation, Plastinina—who speaks almost perfect English, attends an international school and adores "Gossip Girl" and "The Hills"—represents a new fashion identity for Russia beyond flashy designer logos. Her clothes, with an average \$48 price point, are fast fashion moving from East to West, targeting teens who live their lives online, where image is reality more so even than in Hollywood, and cultural and international borders are nonexistent.

When Plastinina staged her first fashion show in March 2007, it looked like a Soviet-era parody with '80s throwback T-shirts, short-shorts, oversized bows and winged models. In October 2007, she had Hilton in her front row—for a reported \$2 million fee. By March 2008, she was showing a full collection of sweet teen clothing in a slickly produced runway production that was documented in a MTV

Russia special, "A Day in the Life With Kira." It followed the teen from her Moscow workroom, where she hands over her girlish drawings to a design team, to her school library, to the fields outside of town where she's filmed cantering on her pony. The brand reported \$20 million in sales its first year.

Not that any of it holds water with the fashion folk. "If there is any demand for her line," sniffs Alyona Isayeva, fashion editor of Russian Harper's Bazaar. "It's mostly in the far-flung provinces."

The Kira machine begins with her father, Sergei Plastinina, one of Russia's largest dairy producers who has a net worth of more than \$500 million. "Sergei really looks at Kira as a prodigy," said Bob Higgins, the industry vet from Wet Seal and Tommy Hilfiger who was hired earlier this year to be senior vice president of retail development and operations.

Before she opened her first store in the U.S., Plastinina had a MySpace page and a Website playing American music, alongside clips from fashion shows, videos and photos with Hilton. Harrison and Shriftman, the go-to public relations company for chick events such as the "Bridget Jones's Diary" and "Legally Blonde" premieres, was hired to introduce Kira Plastinina to the U.S. beginning with a pink-themed party in New York in January. An L.A. production company, the Outfit, which has produced music videos for the Pussycat Dolls, was tapped to



document the New York trip for the website.

Plastinina is moving to L.A. for the summer, where she'll be hanging out on the beach in "the

Colony," as she calls it, and walking red carpets all over town, including her own. She'll make her L.A. debut June 16 at another pink-themed party, where Chris

Brown is slated to perform.

Last week, she was walking a trendy local street, known as the boulevard of paparazzi princesses. Plastinina looked at home in

Getting a line on a stylish Russian heiress

By MELISSA MAGSAYAY
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Kira Plastinina isn't the only Russian heiress playing the international fashion game.

Meet Dasha Zhukova, the "Kova" behind the sexy Kova & T line and one of the new generation of privileged young Russians known as the "spoilt bratskies." Zhukova is a regular on the global social circuit, partying with Joy Bryant and China Chow in Los Angeles, shopping with Camilla Al Fayed in London.

She's opening a fashionably contemporary art space in Moscow in July, with Amy Winehouse performing at the opening bash. She's 26, beautiful and wealthy (her dad is oil magnate Alexander Zhukov), and she's on her way to becoming an actual trendsetter.

"Russian women have always been into their appearance," Zhukova says. "But now you see stilettos on the subway. There's that cliché—Russian-style, head-to-toe logos—but

there are also girls that dress much cooler, especially in the younger generation."

Unlike Plastinina's girlie pink and ruffles, Zhukova's line is understated, simple and harder edged. The media have gone so far as to call it a "Dasha" look—dark colors, T-shirts tucked into bandage skirts and dresses that show a lot of leg. Throngs of young Russians are imitating it.

You might say Kova & T began as an anti-flash brand. In late 2004, Zhukova and her best friend, Christina Tang, longed for a clean, simple jeans in a season of over-embellished, logo-heavy denim. When they couldn't find it, they decided to make their own. Neither had a design background (Tang, then 22, was studying sociology; Zhukova was pre-med).

"Getting our first jeans done took so long," Tang says. "It's such a mathematical process. We had to learn about shrinkage and fabric characteristics. It was challenging."

In 2006, they launched the

line with skinny and boot-cut jeans and high-waist shorts. "We always had the idea to make a skinny jeans," Zhukova says.

"But since the process took us a year and half, by the time we did it, it was nothing special."

They added a cotton dress, shorts and a "perfect" white T-shirt to round out the collection. The mix of inspiration from their travels and chic circle of friends (they name their clothing after their pals) proved to be a successful formula. Kova & T is sold at Saks Fifth Avenue, Harvey Nichols in London and Tsum in Moscow, where the Dasha skinny jeans is a sellout.

Kova & T's Oxy legging was the line's second hit. The shimmery second skin looks like the bottom of Catwoman's unitard and is being worn by stylish Russian girls; Kate Moss, Mischa Barton and the Olsen twins have popped them on with high-top sneakers, vintage T-shirts and fedoras. The leggings are oil-slick dark, unforgiving and edgier than others put out by American Ap-

parel; Kova & T's look more like fashion than costume.

"We still get calls about it," Tang says. "Stores keep reordering and people ask me about it all the time on Facebook."

The partners continue to design from different parts of the world: Zhukova lives in London and Moscow, Tang in Los Angeles. They speak or text message several times a day. "I'm more influenced by what goes on in the States," Tang says. "Dasha gets great ideas for pieces from what she sees in Europe and Russia."

Says Zhukova: "We have different styles but appreciate each other. We're a melting pot."

Unlike Plastinina, the pair say that a slew of retail stores is not in Kova & T's immediate future. And though the two Russians share that "bratski" status, Zhukova's knowledge of the hot-pink-loving teen is limited.

"Does she really have 40 stores in Russia?" Zhukova asks. "Huh. I've never seen one."

A Paris-and-Nicoleski comment if there ever were one.

front of the storefront with "Kira Plastinina" written in loopy pink script across the front, just across the street from Kitson. Inside, the space is similar to her stores in Russia, she said, with lots of hot pink, chandeliers and poufs to sit on. She was wearing her own line, as she usually does, including a \$34 rhinestone studded denim miniskirt and a cobalt blue patent leather bag with tortoise handles that packed a lot of style for \$48.

And if she was still a little unsure of how to vamp for the camera, she'll learn soon enough, with pal Audrina Partridge of "The Hills" to teach her. Plastinina contacted the reality show star, the only "Hills" principle without her own clothing line, to meet for dinner in L.A., and recruited her as an official brand ambassador.

"We wanted to be very strategic," says Higgins, adding that the company has also leased space at the Fashion Show Mall in Las Vegas. "We're a designer brand but also at a price where anyone can come in and shop. Our core girl is 20 to 21 years old, but that's aspirational, because everyone kind of wants to be 21."

Just weeks shy of her 16th birthday on June 1, Plastinina still carries herself like a girl, not a woman. She would rather talk friendship bracelets ("One of my friends has the same birthday as mine on the same hour?") and pet miniature pigs ("I want one for my birthday"), than designer clothes and marketing strategy.

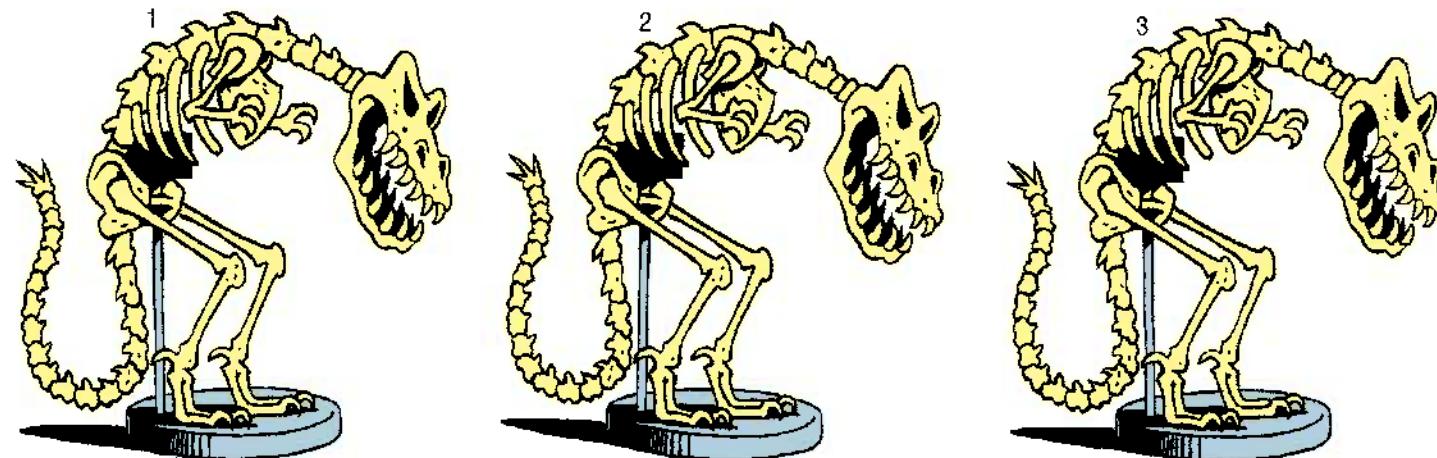
Her drawings resemble high school doodles more than professional fashion sketches. Still, she insists every piece in her collection is based on one of her ideas. Less sportswear and more European-influenced streetwear, the line features lots of colored denim jackets, short sequined jumpers and pants tapered at the ankles so they can be worn long or scrunched up to the knee with heels.

"You know how you are supposed to make a wedding dress for the end of a show? Well, I made a white coat," she says, standing up from the lunch table to demonstrate how the coat fell to the floor. "It was quilted all over, and it had a print that said, 'I believe in love.' Plastinina is entering a tough U.S. retail environment. Last month, teen retailers reported an 8 percent drop in sales, the worst in 17 years. But lower priced stores are expected to continue to do well.

The company has a distribution center in Compton near downtown Los Angeles, so there will be new deliveries every four to six weeks, and it has partnered with Dylan's Candy Bar—the sweets boutique run by Ralph Lauren's daughter—on candy corners for every store.

Bob Weber Jr.'s
SLYLOCK FOX
 and
 COMICS for KIDS

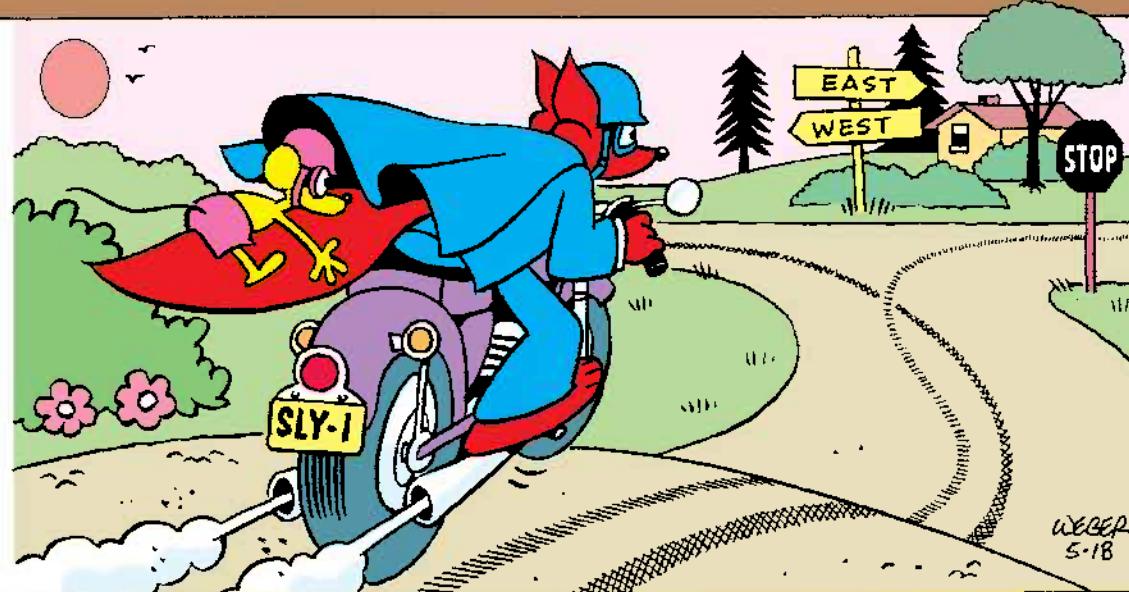
Which dinosaur skeleton is slightly different from the other two?



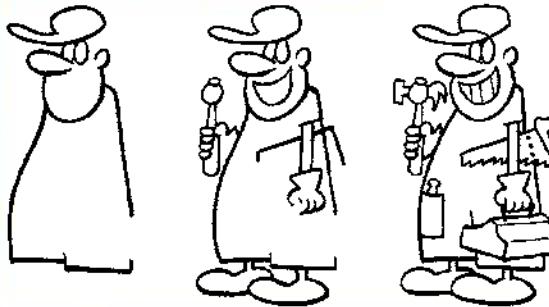
Answer -- Number Two.

Slylock Fox is pursuing two motorcycle-riding bank robbers. The robber holding the money arrived at the junction first and went one way. His empty-handed partner tried to confuse Slylock by going the other way. Which direction did the cash-carrying crook go?

Solution -- Observe how the other trail track under the lead robber's feet. Slylock should go west. Slylock should go west. Slylock should go west.



HOW TO DRAW a carpenter



YOUR DRAWING



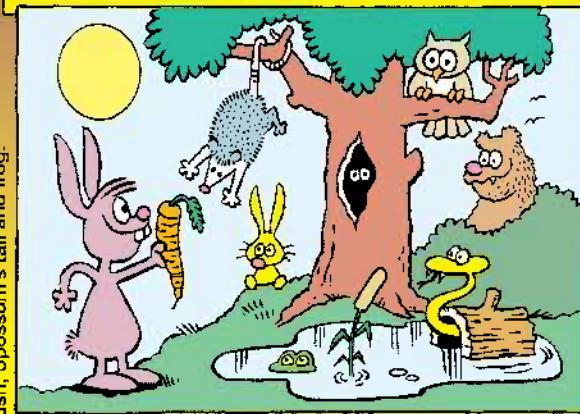
Send your drawings to
www.kidcartoonists.com

The scrambled words are things found in a movie theater. How many can you unscramble?

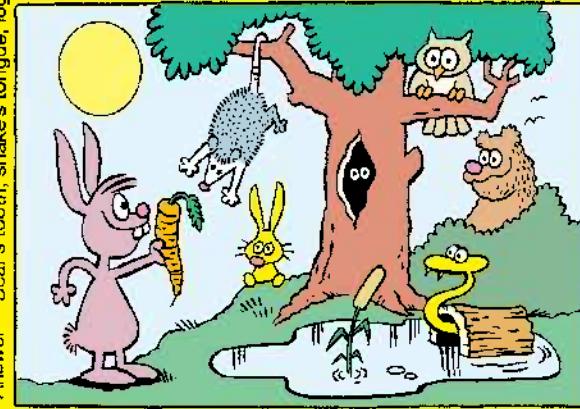
- a) CNOPROP
- b) ESNECR
- c) DAYCN
- d) ASETS
- e) KETCIT

Answer -- a) Candy, b) Seats, c) Screen, d) Seats, e) Ticket
 New! The fourth *Find the six differences* collection is here. Send \$4 (check/money order in U.S. funds made payable to King Features) with your name and address to *Six Differences* No. 4, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32833-6475

Find six differences between these panels.



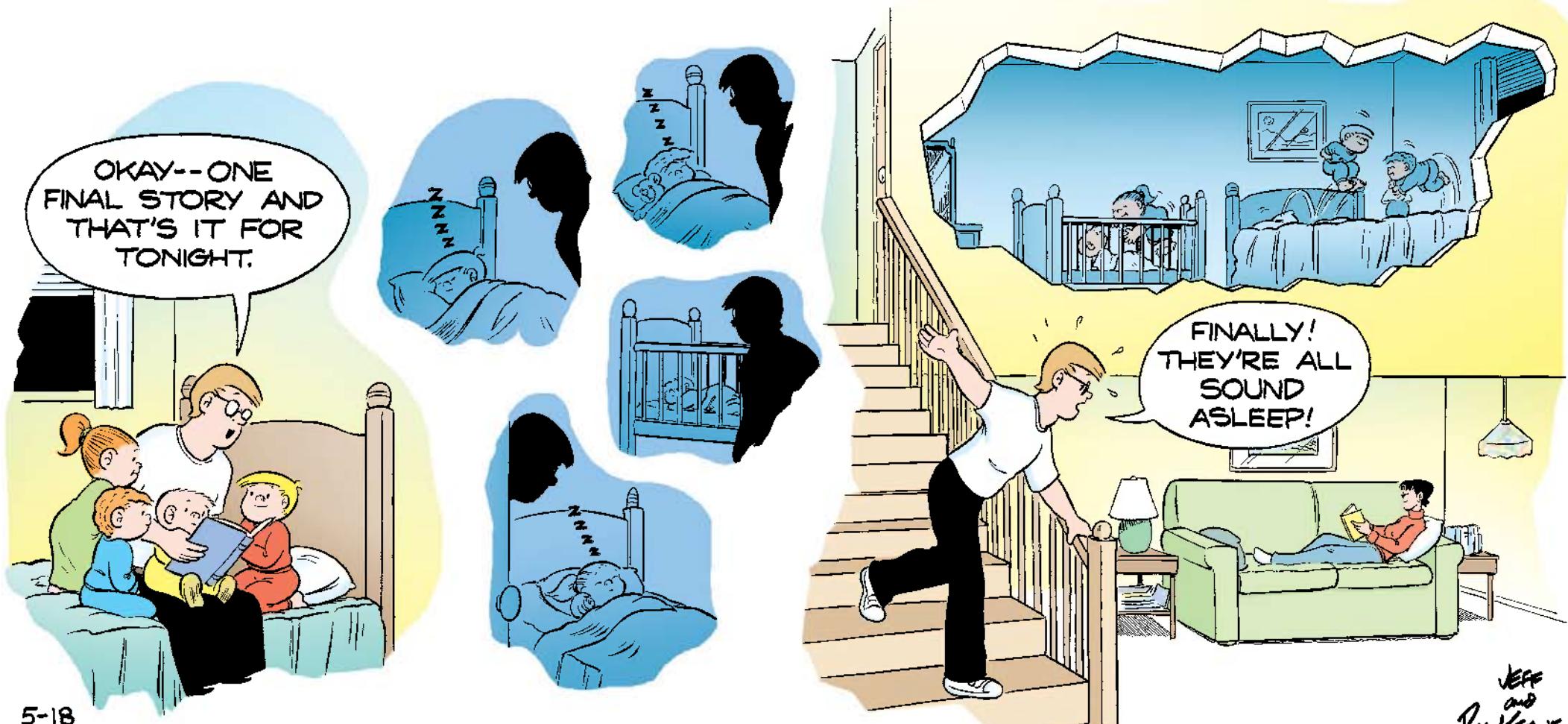
www.kidcartoonists.com



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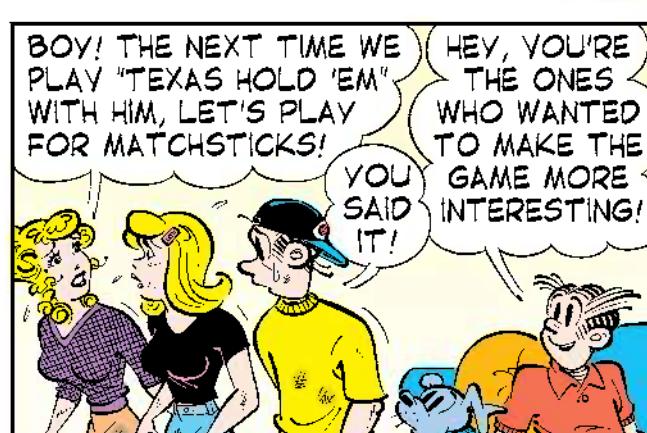
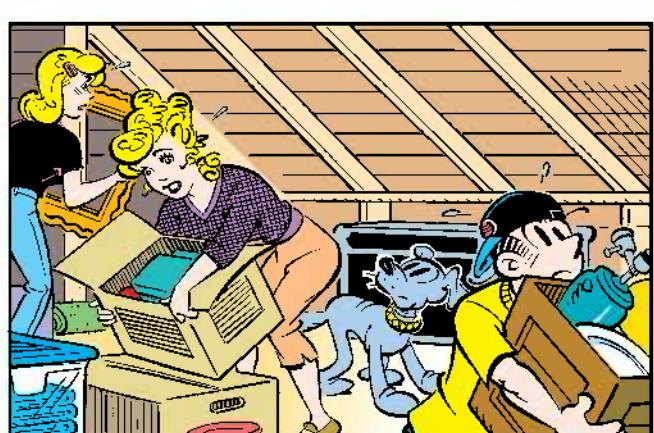
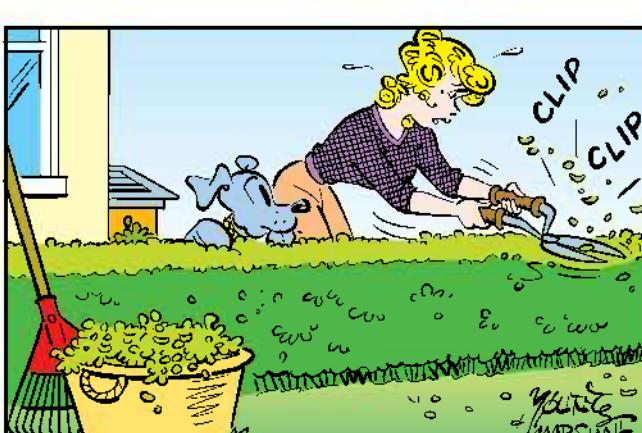
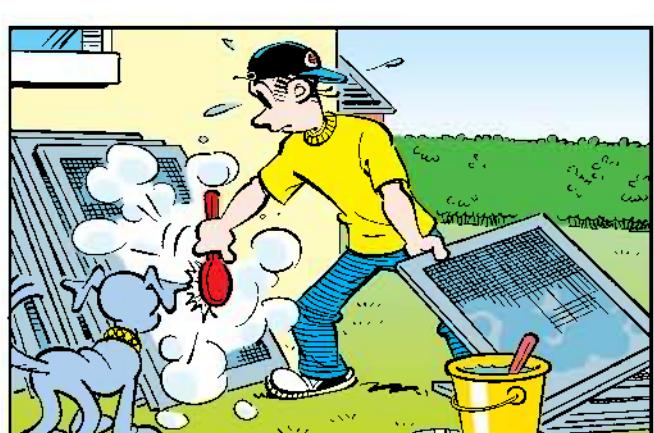
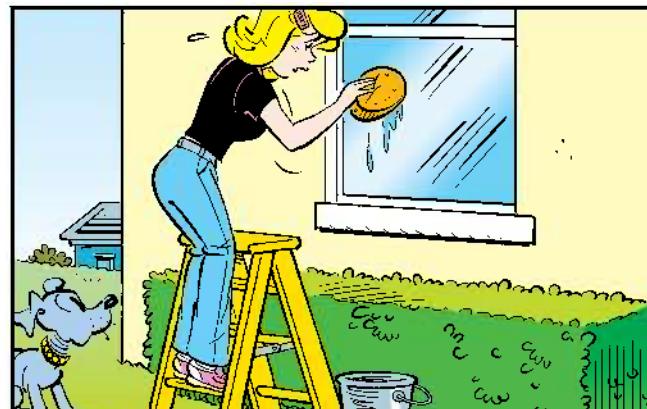
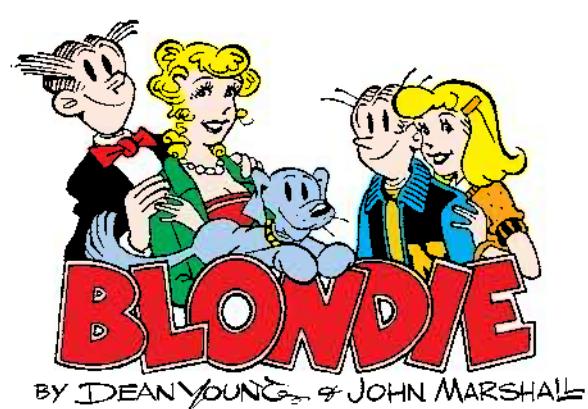
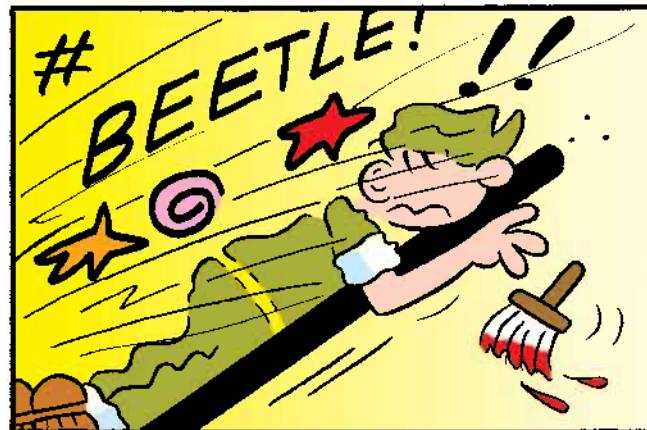
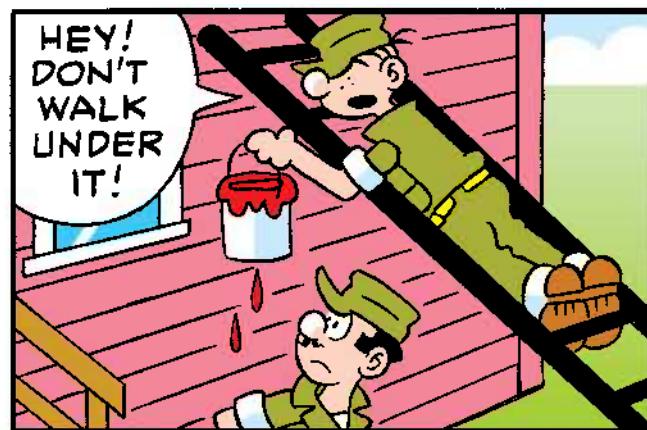
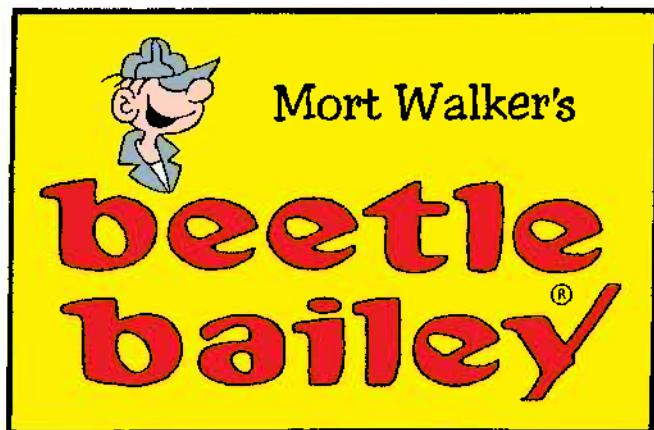
THE FAMILY CIRCUS®

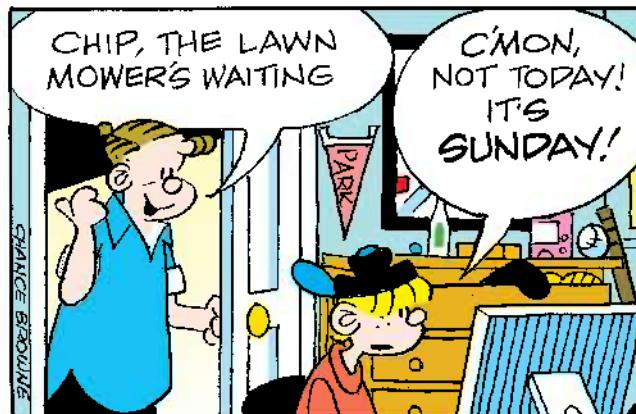
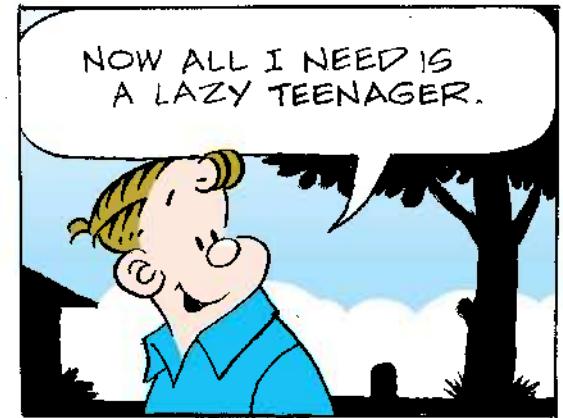
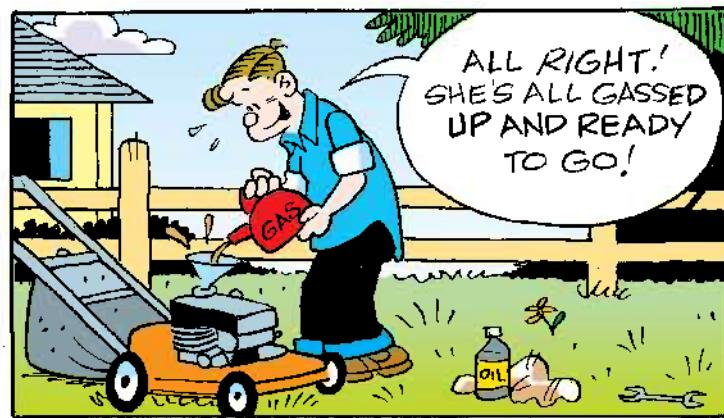
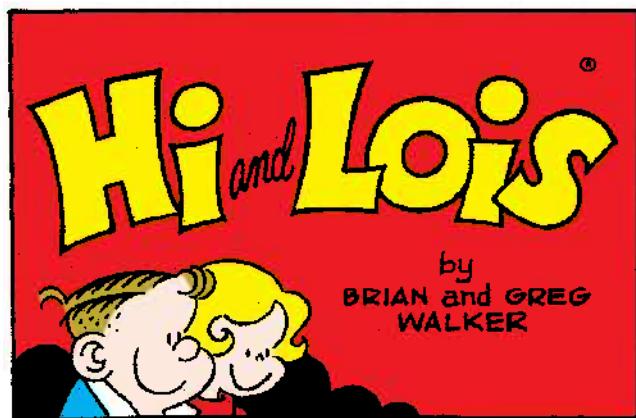
By BIL KEANE



www.familycircus.com

JEFF
and
BIL KEANE

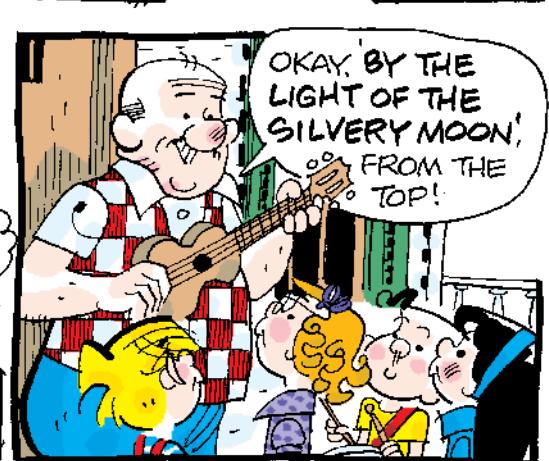
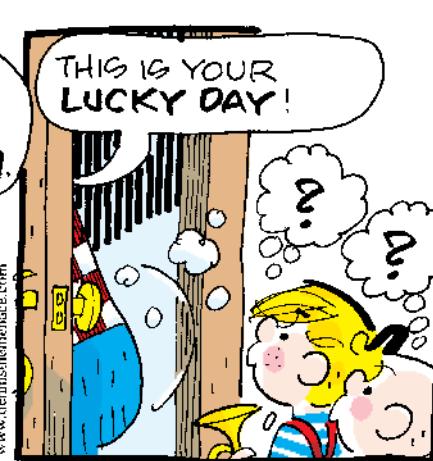
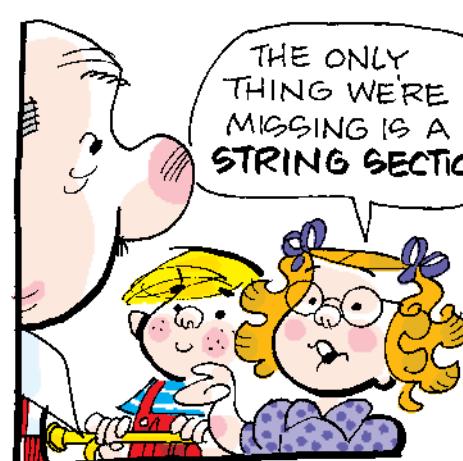
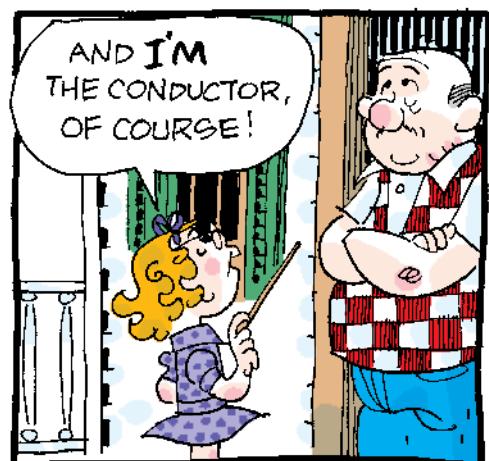
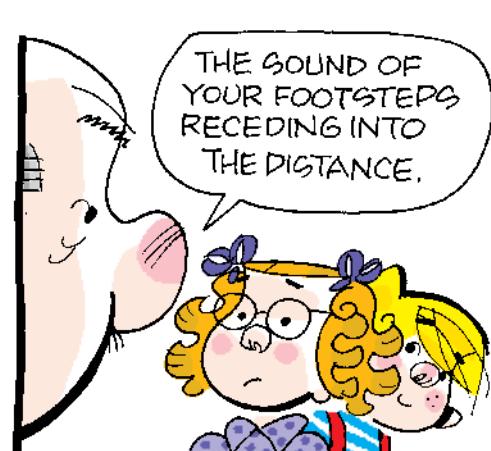
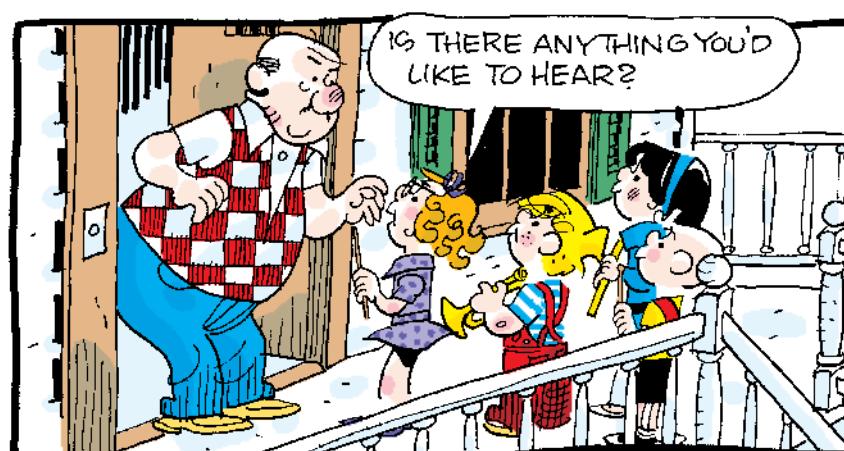




Hand-drawn

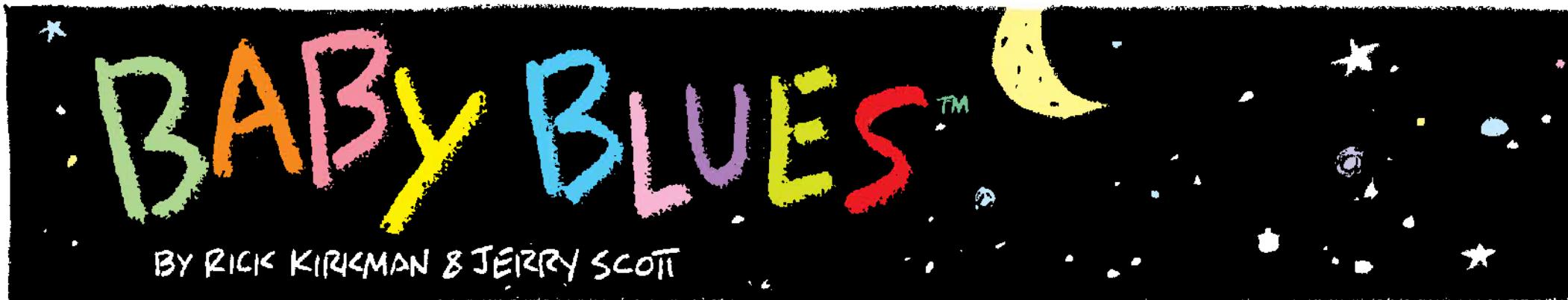
Dennis the MENACE

No Strings Attached



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www.dennisthemenace.com



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LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) Your decision to be upfront with colleagues on a touchy matter causes some consternation at first. But in the end, your honesty wins their trust and admiration.



SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) As in the past, someone again wants to share a secret with you, knowing it will be safe. But do you really want to be this person's confidante? Think about it.



SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) As one of nature's straight shooters, you seek to correct misconceptions about a project. Do so, of course, but without giving away too much too soon.



CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) Creative pursuits continue to be strong in the gifted Goat's aspect. New friendships can come from sharing these experiences with like-minded art aficionados.



AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Resolve lingering grumblings over your way of doing things by keeping your mind open to suggestions while continuing to show how your plans will work.



PISCES (February 19 to March 20) The perceptive Piscean might find that changing course in midstream isn't as workable as it would seem. Explore this option carefully before making a decision.

BORN THIS WEEK: Your willingness to share your love of life's good things brings joy to many, including, of course, yourself.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) Taking advice isn't always easy for self-assured Rams and Ewes who think they know what's best. But it wouldn't hurt to listen to what close colleagues have to say.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) You know how to balance life's practical aspects with the poetic. This gives you a special edge this week in both your professional endeavors and your personal life.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) Focus on keeping a balance between your home-related activities and your workplace responsibilities. Be mindful of both without obsessing over one or the other.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) A change in plans is likely as you discover more facts about a possible commitment. Continue to ask questions and, if you're not sure about the answers, demand proof.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) Be careful not to let that Leone pride keep you from seeking wise, experienced counsel before making an important decision. A family member once again seeks your help.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) That surge of Virgo energy drives you to take on more work assignments. Be careful you don't overdo it, or you might find yourself overdone: i.e., burned out.

King Crossword

ACROSS

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DOWN

53	Bouquet	10	Appomattox	33	Orchestra
54	Actor Beatty	11	VIP	34	leader
55	Responsi-	12	Tackle's	35	Montana or
	bility	13	teammate	36	Namath
		14	A billion	37	Stick with a
		15	years	38	kick
		16		39	Tusk material
		17		40	De-squeaked
		18		41	“- go bragh!”
		19		42	Humdinger
		20		43	Retainers
		21		44	Very quietly,
		22		45	to 33-Down
		23		46	Tic-tac-toe
		24		47	win
		25		48	Reason to
		26			say “alas”
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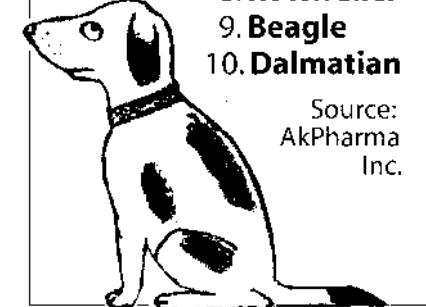
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top ten

GASTEST DOGS

1. German Shepherd
2. Mutt
3. Labrador Retriever
4. Boxer
5. Doberman Pinscher
6. Poodle
7. Cocker Spaniel
8. Rottweiler
9. Beagle
10. Dalmatian

Source: AkPharma Inc.



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KING CROSSWORD LAST SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

G	U	R	U	S	I	B	B	I	S		
O	P	E	N	T	I	E	E	S	A		
B	I	F	F	A	I	R	E	D	A	L	E
I	N	I	I	I	G	A	B	B	E		
I	A	L	L	A	L	L	G	L	O		
I	A	K	E	A	H	G	U	E	L		
M	A	M	A	Y	A	R	D	S	A		
O	R	B	R	O	D	E					
L	I	N	E	A	P	Y	T	H	O		
A	I	A	N	H	A	I	F	T	A		
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F	Y	F	S	P	I	N	F	I	K		

United States

Obama criticizes McCain for 'naive' foreign policy

WATERTOWN, S.D. (AP)—Barack Obama laid into John McCain on Friday for advancing a tough-guy foreign policy that he called "naive and irresponsible," serving notice that he's ready to launch a full-throttle challenge to the Republican presidential contender on international relations in the general election campaign.

Lumping McCain together with President Bush, Obama declared: "If they want a debate about protecting the United States of America, that's a debate I'm ready to win because George Bush and John McCain have a lot to answer for." He blamed Bush for policies that enhance the strength of terrorist groups such as Hamas and "the fact that al-Qaida's leadership is stronger than ever because we took our eye off the ball in Afghanistan," among other failings.

McCain agreed, at least, that there were huge differences between himself and Obama on foreign policy, and said he'd be happy to let the American people decide who was right.

"It would be a wonderful thing if we lived in a world where we don't have enemies. But that's not the world we live in. And until Senator Obama understands that reality, the American people have every reason to doubt whether he has the strength, judgment and determination to keep us safe," McCain said in a speech to the National Rifle Association in Louisville, Ky.

McCain rejected the naive comment, saying Obama should have known better, and added: "Talking, not even with soaring rhetoric, in unconditional meetings with the man who calls Israel 'a stinking corpse,' and arms terrorists who kill Americans, will not convince Iran to give up its nuclear program. It is reckless. It is reckless to suggest that unconditional meetings will advance our interests."

His campaign issued a statement accusing Obama of making a "hysterical diatribe."

Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., waits backstage before a rally in Sioux Falls, S.D., Friday, May 16, 2008. AP



Texas assesses whether sect 'girls' are adults

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—When Texas child welfare authorities released statistics showing nearly 60 percent of the teen girls taken from a polygamist sect's ranch were pregnant or had children, they seemed to prove what was alleged all along: The sect commonly pushed girls into marriage and sex.

But in the past week, the state has twice been forced to admit "girls" who gave birth while in state custody are actually adults. One was 22 and claims she showed state officials a Utah birth certificate shortly after she and more than 400 minors were seized from the west Texas ranch in an April raid.

The state has in custody two dozen other young mothers and others whose ages are in dispute. If most of them also turn out to be adults, it would be a severe blow to the state's claim of widespread sexual abuse.

If it turns out the other 24 disputed minors are adults, the number of actual 14- to 17-year-old girls with children could drop to as low as five or six. That would amount to about one-fifth of the girls that age found at the ranch—substantially higher than the average rate of teen pregnancies in Texas but a far cry from 60 percent.

Intel agencies seek help recruiting new immigrants

MCLEAN, VA (AP)—The U.S. is its own worst enemy when it comes to the desperately important task of recruiting immigrants as spies, analysts and translators in the war on terror, new Americans are telling intelligence officials. The government's policies raise suspicions and fear in the immigrants' home countries and disturb potential recruits here who might otherwise want to help.

The U.S. knows it needs the

help. At the heart of a Friday summit with immigrant groups was a stark reality: The intelligence agencies lack people who can speak the languages that are needed most, such as Arabic, Farsi and Pashto. More importantly, the agencies lack people with the cultural awareness that enables them to grasp the nuances embedded in dialect, body language and even street graffiti.

At the suburban Virginia

summit, not far from the CIA and National Counterterrorism Center, officials gathered more than a dozen representatives of recent immigrant and other ethnic groups to get their recruiting assistance.

"We are going to ask you to open up your communities to us," said Ronald Sanders, an assistant national intelligence director, and the son of an Egyptian immigrant mother.

The officials got an earful in

return—about immigration and hiring rules and foreign policies that make life harder in immigrants' old countries. The intelligence agencies' own practices also came under criticism: extraordinary rendition, holding prisoners at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, harsh interrogation practices that some say amount to torture.

"Basically they've scared people," said Amina Khan, of the Association of Pakistani

ACROSS THE NATION

Court sides with MySpace in suit over sex assault

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—Federal law gives MySpace.com immunity from a lawsuit over the alleged sexual assault of a teenage girl by a man she met on the social networking Web site, a federal appeals court ruled Friday. The 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the dismissal of a lawsuit that a Texas girl's family filed against MySpace and its parent company, News Corp.

The family said MySpace didn't protect young users from sexual predators. The appeals court ruled that the Communications Decency Act of 1996 bars such lawsuits against Web-based services like MySpace. A federal judge in Austin, Texas, dismissed the \$30 million lawsuit on the same grounds last year. "Parties complaining that they were harmed by a Web site's publication of user-generated content have recourse; they may sue the third-party user who generated the content, but not the interactive computer service that enabled them to publish the content online," Judge Edith Brown Clement wrote in the ruling.

Tribe seeks conciliation with SoCal deputies

SAN JACINTO, Calif. (AP)—The leader of a Southern California Indian tribe and a sheriff's department vowed Friday to work together to lower tensions after three people were killed on the reservation in gun battles with deputies. Tribe Chairman Robert Salgado declined to elaborate, citing a mutual agreement with the Riverside County Sheriff's Department to remain silent about their closed-door negotiations with a federal mediator. Sheriff's policies

and procedures would be reviewed at a meeting tentatively set for next week, said Dale Morris, regional director of the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs. Morris called the effort "a first step" after days of antagonism between the tribe and law enforcement. The two-hour summit came four days after deputies pursued a man and woman into the hills of the reservation southeast of Los Angeles following reports of shots fired at a tribal security guard shack.

Carnival ride collapses in California; 17 injured

ANGELS CAMP, Calif. (AP)—A carnival ride spinning with people collapsed at a county fair Friday night, injuring at least 17, including three seriously, an emergency official said. The ride has arms that fling out as they spin around an axis, said Dennis Townsend with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Prevention. He didn't know what might have caused the collapse or have details about the condition of those injured. Three people with serious injuries were airlifted to area hospitals, Townsend said. Fourteen others were treated for minor injuries. The fair remained open but the carnival area was shut down following the accident, said Laurie Giannini, the fairground's marketing director. She said there were no fatalities. State accident investigators were en route to the fairgrounds, Townsend said. The annual Calaveras County Fair and Jumping Frog Jubilee draws thousands of people to the fairgrounds just outside the Gold Rush-era town of Angels Camp in the Sierra Nevada foothills, about 80 miles southeast of Sacramento. It bills itself as an "old-fashion county fair" with exhibits and a variety of entertainment.

Florida, Michigan cannot save Clinton

WASHINGTON (AP)—Michigan and Florida alone can't save Hillary Rodham Clinton's campaign.

Interviews with those considering how to handle the two states' banished convention delegates found little interest in the former first lady's best-case scenario. Her position, part of a formidable comeback challenge, is that all the delegates be seated in accordance with their disputed primaries.

Even if they were, it wouldn't erase Barack Obama's growing lead in delegates.

The Democratic Party's Rules and Bylaws Committee, a 30-member panel charged with interpreting and enforcing party rules, is to meet May 31 to consider how to handle Michigan and Florida's 368 delegates—both pledged delegates and superdelegates.

Last year, the panel imposed the harshest punishment it could render against the two states after they scheduled primaries in January, even though they were instructed not to vote until Feb. 5 or later. Michigan and Florida lost all their delegates to the national convention, and all the Democratic candidates agreed not to campaign in the two states, stripping them of all the influence they were trying to build by voting early.

But now there is agreement on all sides that at least some of the delegates should be restored in a gesture of party unity and respect to voters in two general election battlegrounds.

Clinton has been arguing for full reinstatement, which would boost her standing. She won both states, even though they didn't count toward the nomination and neither candidate campaigned in them. Obama even had his name pulled from Michigan's ballot.

The Associated Press interviewed a third of the panel members and several other Democrats involved in the negotiations and found widespread agreement that the states must be punished for stepping out of line. If not, many members say, other states will do the same thing in four years.

Asia



In this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, a man is rescued from the debris of a collapsed building 97 hours after Monday's earthquake in Beichuan County, in southwest China's Sichuan Province, Friday, May 16, 2008.

Trapped survivors freed after nearly 100 hours

YINGXIU, China (AP)—A powerful aftershock knocked out roads and communications in some of the most quake-ravaged parts of central China on Friday, as emergency crews rescued 163 people who had survived up to 100 improbable hours trapped in the ruins.

As Saturday dawned, rescuers were holding out hope of finding more survivors and authorities were preparing for the daunting task of housing and feeding millions left homeless.

With the official death toll at more than 22,000, an air force unit reached Yinchanggou, a scenic spot in the mountains north of the Sichuan provincial

capital of Chengdu, finding landslides had swept away rustic small hotels.

“There are several hundred hotels, including farmer homestays, probably 800 in all. They are all

RELATED NEWS

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- US monitoring China's nuclear sites after quake

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rubble now,” Cai Weisu, an official with an air force unit from the Chengdu Military Region, told Sichuan Television. Most of the dead are tourists, he said, but did not identify whether they were foreign or Chinese.

Tens of thousands of people are considered buried or missing throughout the disaster zone. There were about 12 million people living within a 60-mile radius of the epicenter of Wenchuan, according to a study on the potential impact of the quake by Xu Mingbao, a senior researcher at the University of Michigan’s China Data Center.

Acutely aware its response to China’s worst disaster in 30 years could affect Beijing’s image heading into the Olympic Games, President Hu Jintao ramped up the government’s public relations efforts, making his first trip to the stricken region.

Death toll from Myanmar cyclone nearly doubles

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—The official death toll nearly doubled to 78,000 from Myanmar’s killer cyclone as heavy rains on Friday lashed much of the area stricken two weeks ago, further hampering relief efforts.

Aid workers shackled by the country’s military regime struggled to get even the most basic data about the needs of

up to 2.5 million survivors. The Red Cross warned that a lack of clean water may swell the ranks of the dead.

Myanmar state television said the official death count from the May 3 cyclone was 77,738, with 55,917 others missing.

The toll was nearly double the 43,000 previously reported, but the TV announcement suggested it might be close to a final figure.

The release of the figures led to dire warnings from the United Nations and renewed calls for the military regime to allow international aid workers access to devastated areas.

Myanmar’s junta confines foreigners to Yangon

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Myanmar’s military rulers have thrown a tightening ring of security around Yangon, blocking aid workers, foreign diplomats and journalists from reaching cyclone-battered regions where millions need food and medicine.

New roadblocks manned by armed police have sprung up around Myanmar’s largest city. Authorities at the checkpoints take down passport information and license plate numbers and sometimes interrogate drivers and their foreign passengers before ordering them to return to Yangon.

“A circle has been drawn around Yangon and expats are confined there. While you are getting

aid through, it’s like getting it through a 3-inch pipe, not a 30-inch pipe,” said Tim Costello, president of the aid agency World Vision-Australia, in Yangon.

“Foreigners can’t go this way,” a policeman Friday told a driver with a foreign journalist at a checkpoint manned by 10 police and an immigration official dressed in khaki.

The reporter was heading north of Yangon, not even in the direction of the Irrawaddy delta, where Cyclone Nargis spent its greatest fury two weeks ago. The United Nations says more than 100,000 may have perished while up to 2.5 million survivors face starvation and disease.

Across The Globe

bin Laden says Palestinian cause at heart of jihad

CAIRO, Egypt (AP)—Osama bin Laden vowed Friday to fight Israel for the liberation of the Palestinians, claiming their cause is at the heart of al-Qaida’s holy war with the West.

The terrorist leader’s third statement this year was released to coincide with the Jewish state’s 60th anniversary and came out as President Bush was wrapping up his visit to Israel to celebrate the occasion.

“We will continue our struggle against the Israelis and their allies,” bin Laden said in a 10-minute audio posted on an Internet site used frequently by al-Qaida. “We are not going to give up an inch of the land of Palestine.”

Al-Qaida is increasingly us-

ing the Israeli-Arab conflict in its media campaign to rally supporters. Israel has warned of growing al-Qaida activity in Palestinian territory, although the terror network is not believed to have taken a strong role there so far.

Bin Laden said the Palestinian cause is the most important factor driving al-Qaida’s war with the West and claimed it was the motivation for the 19 Muslims, most of them Saudi Arabians, who carried out the Sept. 11 attack on the U.S.

“To Western nations ... this speech is to understand the core reason of the war between our civilization and your civilizations. I mean the Palestinian cause,” bin Laden said at the conclusion of his message.

“The Palestinian cause is the major issue for my (Islamic) nation. It was an important element in fueling me from the beginning and the 19 others with a great motive to fight for those subjected to injustice and the oppressed,” he said.

The authenticity of the message could not be verified, but the voice resembled the one in past bin Laden audios. While there was no indication of when the message was recorded, it referred to Israel’s 60th anniversary, which began May 8.

The audio was accompanied by a photo of bin Laden wearing a white robe and turban next to a picture of the Al Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. It was unclear when his picture was taken.

Bush fails to win Saudi help on gas prices

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)—President Bush failed to win the help he sought from Saudi Arabia to relieve skyrocketing American gas prices Friday, a setback for the former Texas oilman who took office predicting he would jawbone oil-producing nations to help the U.S.

Bush got a red-carpet welcome to this desert kingdom, home to the world’s largest oil reserves, and promised to ask King Abdullah to increase production to reduce pressure on prices, which soared past

\$127 for the first time Friday. But Saudi officials said they already were meeting the needs of their customers worldwide and there was no need to pump more.

Their answer recalled Bush’s trip to Saudi Arabia in January when he urged an increase in production but was rebuffed.

Saudi oil minister Ali al-Naimi said the kingdom decided on May 10 to increase production by 300,000 barrels a day to help meet U.S. needs after Venezuela and Mexico

WORLD BRIEFS

Lebanese government, opposition head for talks

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP)—Leaders of Lebanon’s U.S.-backed government and the Hezbollah-led opposition went to Qatar Friday for the highest-level talks since the country’s political crisis began 18 months ago. The talks on forming a national unity government and electing a president were agreed under a deal between feuding factions to end the worst violence since the country’s 1975-1990 civil war. The two sides will begin negotiating on Saturday. A political standoff has paralyzed the country and left it without a president since Emile Lahoud’s term ended last November. A week ago, the standoff dissolved into violence when the government passed measures to rein in Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Hezbollah fighters overran neighborhoods of west Beirut and clashes left 66 people dead and over 200 wounded.

US billionaire: Olmert allegations insulting

JERUSALEM (AP)—A Jewish-American billionaire questioned by police as part of a corruption investigation into Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said Thursday he has never given money to the Israeli leader and called suggestions of any wrongdoing “insulting.” S. Daniel Abraham, a philanthropist who made his fortune as founder of Slim-Fast food products, was summoned by police this week to discuss his ties with Olmert. Police suspect Olmert accepted hundreds of

thousands of dollars in illegal donations in the U.S., either for campaign financing or possibly as bribes. “Of course I never gave any money to Ehud Olmert. The very question is insulting to me,” Abraham told Israel Army Radio. “This is my reputation at stake and I have no reason to risk it.” Abraham, a strong supporter of Israel who is in the country during its 60th anniversary celebrations, said he believes Olmert is honest and “one of the best prime ministers we have ever had.”

Zimbabwe’s presidential showdown set for June 27

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP)—Seven weeks after the presidential election, Zimbabwe finally set a runoff date Friday, saying longtime President Robert Mugabe and rival Morgan Tsvangirai will face off in a June 27 ballot that the opposition fears will be skewed by thuggery and fraud. Opposition supporters have been beaten, killed and driven from their homes in a recent campaign of terror that observers say is meant to secure Mugabe’s lock on power. Tsvangirai had insisted Thursday that the runoff be held next week, amid fears further delay would mean even more violence, but he said after the election commission’s announcement that he planned to compete in the ballot. Tsvangirai, speaking to reporters on the sidelines of an international liberal party conference in Belfast, Northern Ireland, said setting the June date was illegal, but “we will contest.”

Focus

China's 1-child policy causes extra pain

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN

ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

WUFU, China (AP)—After their daughter was born, Bi Kaiwei and his wife, Meilin, decided to adhere to China's one-child policy and its slogan, "Have fewer kids, live better lives."

For them and other couples who lost an only child in this week's massive earthquake, the tragedy has been doubly cruel. Robbed of their sole progeny and a hope for the future, they find it even harder to restart their shattered lives, haunted by added guilt, regret and gnawing loss.

"She died before becoming even a young adult," said Bi, an intense, wiry chemical plant worker, standing beside the grave of 13-year-old Yuexing — one of dozens sprinkled amid fields of ripened spring wheat and newly planted rice. "She never really knew what life was like."

Yuexing, a bright sixth-grader, was in school when Monday's quake struck, bringing the Fuxin No. 2 Primary School crashing down, killing her and 200 other students. Teachers had locked all but one of the school's doors during break time, parents said, leaving only a single door to escape through.

Many among the more than 22,000 people killed across central China were students in school. Nearly 6,900 classrooms collapsed, government officials said Friday, in an admission that highlighted a chronically underfunded education system especially in small towns and compounded the anger of many Chinese over the quake.

In Wufu, a farming village two hours north of the Sichuan provincial capital of Chengdu, most of the dead students were a couple's only child—born under a policy launched in the late 1970s to limit many families to one offspring. The policy was meant to rein in China's exploding population and ensure better education and health care.

The "one-child policy" has been contentious inside China as well as out. The government says it has prevented an additional 400 million births. But critics say it has also led to forced



Bi Kaiwei holds a photo of his daughter Bi Yuexing, who was killed when her schoolroom collapsed in Monday's earthquake, in the rubble of the school in Wufu, in China's southwest Sichuan province Friday May 16, 2008. Most of the students killed when Wufu's school collapsed were only children, deepening the pain of parents who had stuck to China's one-child policy. Parents complained that the school was shoddily built, a common allegation with almost 7,000 schoolrooms destroyed in the earthquake. AP

abortions, sterilizations and a dangerously imbalanced sex ratio as local authorities pursue sometimes severe birth quotas set by Beijing and families abort girls out of a traditional preference for male heirs. The policy is law but there are exceptions.

Farther down the lane from where Yuexing is buried, 10 more graves were laid out, some accompanied by favorite items—textbooks for English and music, a pencil box, a Chinese chess set. At one, grandmother threw herself to the dirt and wailed as her husband lit a handful of "spirit paper" believed to

comfort the dead in the afterlife.

Another bereaved parent, Sang Jun, stood where his daughter, Rui, is buried, a simple mound of dirt beside his quake-shattered farmhouse. The house is surrounded by burned bushes—a traditional disinfectant.

"The house is gone and the child is dead," said Sang, who wore a T-shirt and plastic sandals. His parents, both in their 70s, looked on with tears in their eyes.

Resistance by ordinary Chinese has forced Beijing to relax the policies, allowing many rural families to have a second child if the first was a girl. But

in Wufu, the family planning committee seems to have prevailed on most families to stop at one child. Slogans daubed on boundary walls and houses all along the rutted country road leading to Wufu call on families to "stabilize family planning and create a brighter future."

Standing in the rubble of the school holding his daughter's ID and a posed shot taken at a local salon, Bi — pronounced "Bee"—said starting a new family, either by having another child or adoption, is simply imponderable.

"I'm 37 years old and my child was

13. If we were to do it again, I'd be 50 when this stage comes along," Bi said.

Parents who lose children in disasters often feel intense guilt for what they see as a failure to protect them, said psychology professor Shi Zhanbiao. Parents, he said, may also recall their past relationships with their children with regret, thinking they were too stern, did not show them sufficient love or did not interact with them enough.

"They'll think that if they just hadn't sent their children to school that day, they would have been saved," said Shi, a researcher with the Chinese Academy of Science in Beijing.

The loss is intensified for those with no other offspring to lavish with care and affection, Shi said. And in China, other, more practical concerns may also come into play because children are generally expected to care for their aging parents.

"They'll be worried about the future, because for the later part of their lives, they'll have no one to depend on," Shi said.

Bi said Yuexing was polite and smart. She had won a coveted place at the county's best high school on the recommendation of a teacher. She was a top student who got better after the family moved closer to school to reduce her commuting time, said Bi, who completed high school but failed the national university entrance exam.

In her pictures, Yuexing, whose name combined the Chinese characters for moon and star, is smiling and demure. The studio shot shows her wearing a bright yellow sweater and looking playfully over her shoulder.

Parents in Wufu said they plan to bring a formal complaint over what they say was corruption and malfeasance in construction of the school. They say officials moved the students from a group of one-story classrooms—all of which survived the quake—into a modern-looking, but unsafe building.

"We have nothing else, no other wish but to win justice for our children," said Sang's wife, Zhao Jing. "We put all our hopes on these kids, and this is the return we get."

American experts are monitoring nuclear facilities in China's earthquake zone, officials said Friday, after France's nuclear watchdog reported that some had suffered minor damage.

The French Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety said Chinese authorities "reacted well" to the quake and immediately shut down nuclear sites for inspection.

Thierry Charles, the group's director of plant safety, said China's nuclear safety agency, NNSA, had reported no leaks of radioactivity since the quake.

He said the Chinese reported "light damage" to older nuclear facilities that were being dismantled before the quake, noting that seismic construction codes were less strict when those sites were built. China did not specify which facilities had damage, he said.

China has a research reactor, two nuclear fuel production sites and two

US monitoring China's nuclear sites after quake

atomic weapons sites in Sichuan province, where the magnitude-7.9 quake struck Monday, the French agency said. All were between 40 and 90 miles from the epicenter.

French authorities do not yet have a full picture of any possible damage at the nuclear weapons sites, where information is more closely guarded, Charles said.

"At this stage, I don't think there were any leaks, because they would have reported them by now. The worst to worry about now is degradation of buildings, cracks, this kind of thing," he said.

U.S. officials are monitoring China's nuclear facilities in the quake zone, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said. He said he had no information about any damage.

Wang Baodong, spokesman for the Chinese Embassy in Washington, said he had no information about the state of the atomic sites. But he told reporters the Chinese government was "preparing for every consequence" as it worked to rescue survivors and repair damage.

Nuclear experts said there several possibilities if any significant damage occurred at the plants, at least one of which is alongside a river. A radioactive leak could cause environmental harm, while internal damage could set back China's nuclear modernization, they said.

Mianyang, an industrial city of 700,000 people that is the headquarters of China's nuclear weapons design industry, was on the edge of the disaster area. The site has been likened to the U.S. nuclear facility at

Los Alamos, N.M.

The plutonium production reactor at Guangyuan, China's largest, is also in the quake zone.

"Damage to these plants could potentially be a serious issue for the Chinese government," said Hans Kristensen, a nuclear arms expert at the Federation of American Scientists.

He said the reactor at Guangyuan is "at the center of China's fissile material production."

"If there is damage to (the reactor), it would disrupt China's warhead maintenance capabilities," Kristensen said. "That could have impacts for several years."

Matthew Bunn, a senior researcher at Harvard University's Project on Managing the Atom, said the risk of

radioactive leaks depended mostly on how the facilities were designed, details of which are known only by the Chinese government.

"Only in the reactor's case would there likely be any significant danger of some kind of radioactive release that would affect a large area. And how big that danger is depends enormously on specifics of the reactor's seismic design that are not well known outside the Chinese nuclear weapons program," Bunn said.

Jeffrey Lewis, director of the Nuclear Strategy and Nonproliferation Initiative at the New America Foundation who visited Mianyang last summer, said the buildings were designed to withstand earthquakes.

"I would be surprised if there were any human impact," said Lewis, referring to radioactive leaks. "If anything, there is a possibility for structural damage."

FOCUS

Alabama sheriffs feed inmates on \$1.75 a day

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP)—Back in the day of chain gangs, Alabama passed a law that gave sheriffs \$1.75 a day to feed each prisoner in their jails, and the sheriffs got to pocket anything that was left over. More than 80 years later, most Alabama counties still operate under this system, with the same \$1.75-a-day allowance, and some sheriffs are actually making money on top of their salaries.

But exactly how much is something of a mystery because state auditors do not have access to sheriffs' private accounts.

How could anyone turn a profit feeding men and women for an entire day on less than the price of a Coke and a bag of Fritos? Sheriffs practice Depression-style frugality and rely on such things as day-old bread, cut-rate vegetables and cheap inmate labor.

Critics charge that Alabama is, in effect, paying law enforcement to skimp on food and may be rewarding sheriffs for mistreating prisoners.

"It's a bad system, and it ought not be that way," said Buddy Sharpless, executive director of the Association of County Commissions of Alabama.

A prisoner advocate said he constantly hears complaints about jail food.

"Most of it is like powdered food, and the portions are minimal in the county jails," said the Rev. Kenneth Glasgow, who visits Alabama jails to register prisoners to vote.

The few sheriffs who would discuss the arrangement defended it as cost-effective for their counties and disputed any suggestion they are making a lot of money.

"If you've got the most lucrative food account in the state, you're not getting rich," said Limestone County Sheriff Mike Blakely.

They noted, too, that it's not all gravy for them: The system makes them personally liable for budget shortfalls and, possibly, lawsuits over jail food.

The head of the Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts, Ron Jones, said state auditors cannot determine how much some sheriffs are making off the system because the lawmen put the money in personal accounts.

In Morgan County, which includes Decatur, a state audit found that Sheriff Greg Bartlett spent \$163,991 feeding inmates and personally received an additional \$103,947 for two years ending in May 2005. But Jones said there was no way for auditors to determine how much of the money that went to the sheriff was profit, because sheriffs may be buying food out of their own pockets. Bartlett did not return calls for comment.

When Etowah County Sheriff James Hayes died in October, thousands of dollars in jail food money went to his estate because it was kept in his personal accounts.

His successor, Todd Entrekin, said he and his wife took out a personal loan for \$150,000 the day he took office to purchase jail food until his first state payment came through.

"It's the most money I've ever borrowed in

my life, even more than for my house," Entrekin said.

According to legislative researchers, the \$1.75-a-day-per-inmate system in Alabama dates to 1927, back when sheriffs and other county officeholders in many states were paid fixed fees for services performed and were allowed to keep whatever was left over.

All but 12 of Alabama's 67 county jails remain on the fee system, with the state paying a total of \$5 million to 55 sheriffs last year.

National corrections groups said they do not know of any other states with a system like Alabama's, though some individual counties may use a fee system.

The \$1.75 fee was fairly generous at the time, with a reasonable profit built into it for the sheriffs. Besides the \$1.75, sheriffs get additional state payments of as much as \$11.25 a day for the entire jail. But in a jail with hundreds of inmates, that works out to just a few extra pennies per person for food.

By comparison, the government pays schools \$2.47 for serving a single free meal under the National School Lunch Program for low-income students.

Cherokee County Sheriff Jeff Shaver said he has figured out how to feed prisoners on \$1.75 a day and still turn a little profit, and he doesn't get complaints about the grub.

"These people eat better here than they eat on the street, and they eat three times a day," Shaver said.

He said he is constantly on the lookout for good deals on food, pays two cooks and supplements their work with trusty labor, and wastes nothing, turning today's leftovers tomorrow's soup.

Blakely, the Limestone County sheriff, said he searches for deals on fresh vegetables, eggs and milk. Prisoners get three meals on weekdays, two on weekends and holidays. "They get a lot of beans, but we feed them meat every day," Blakely said.

The menu on a recent day in the Limestone County Jail was two pancakes and syrup, sausage and milk for breakfast; peanut butter sandwiches, chips and Kool-Aid for lunch; and white beans, turnip greens, fried squash, cornbread and sweet tea for dinner.

Blakely and Shaver would not say exactly how much money they make off the jail food system but said it is not a lot. Entrekin said he has not been sheriff long enough to say whether he is turning a profit for himself.

Blakely said prisoners who enter the jail late at night on charges such as drunken driving and make bail early the next day without eating a meal help the bottom line because the state pays for two days of food - \$3.50 - without the sheriff having to spend a cent.

Inmate William Howell said state prisons offer more food than Blakely's jail. But he said the food in state prison isn't nearly as good.

"It's not like they go down to the bread store and catch it coming out of the oven, but it's good," Howell said. "We've got it good here."



Limestone County Sheriff Mike Blakely is shown in the jail kitchen as he discusses feeding prisoners on Wednesday, April 9, 2008, in Athens, Ala. Back in the day of chain gangs, Alabama passed a law that gave sheriffs \$1.75 a day to feed each prisoner in their jails, and the sheriffs got to pocket anything that was left over.

Life & Style



In this photo originally provided by Departures Magazine, wine makers, Robert Mondavi, left, and his brother Peter Mondavi, hold hands at the 26th annual Auction Napa Valley at Meadowood Resort, on June 3, 2006, in St. Helena, Calif. Robert Mondavi, the pioneering vintner who put California wine country on the global map, died Friday, May 16, 2008. He was 94. AP

Calif. wine patriarch Mondavi dies at 94

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP)—Robert Mondavi, the vintner who built his career and helped an iconic Northern California industry blossom by insisting that Napa Valley wines can compete with the best in the world, died in the valley Friday. He was 94.

Mondavi died peacefully at his home in Yountville, Robert Mondavi Winery spokeswoman Mia Malm said.

"It is hard to imagine anyone having more of a lasting impact on California's \$20 billion-a-year wine industry than Robert Mondavi," Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger said in a statement. Mondavi, said the governor, was "a tireless entrepreneur who transformed how the world felt about California wine, and an unforgettable personality to everyone who knew him."

Mondavi was 52 and a wine-making veteran in 1966, when he opened the winery that would help turn the Napa Valley into a world center of the industry. Clashes with a brother that included a fistfight led him to break from the family business to carry out his ambitious plans with borrowed money.

When Mondavi opened his winery, California was still primarily known for cheap jug wines. But he set out to change that, championing use of cold fermentation, stainless steel tanks and French oak barrels, all commonplace in the industry today. He introduced blind tastings in Napa Valley, putting his wines up against French vintages, a bold move.

His confidence was rewarded in 1976 when California wines beat some well-known French vintages in the famous tasting known as the Judgment of Paris.

"He had the single greatest influence in this country with respect to high quality wine and its place at the table," wine critic Robert Parker wrote in a chat room posting on his Web site Friday. He called Mondavi "an exceptional man....a true pioneer...a legendary pathfinder....and I feel so privileged to have known him...a sad day...but also one to pay homage to his enormous contributions."

Always convinced that California wines could compete with the European greats, Mondavi engaged in the first French-American wine venture when he formed a limited partnership with the legendary French vintner Baron Philippe de Rothschild to grow and make the ultra-premium Opus One at Oakville. The venture's first vintage was in 1979.

The success of the Mondavi winery allowed him to donate tens of millions of dollars to charity, but a wine glut and intense competition gradually cost his family control of the business. In 2004, the company accepted a buyout worth \$1.3 billion from Fairport, N.Y.-based Constellation Brands.

Mondavi was an enthusiastic ambassador for wine—especially California wine—and traveled the world into his 90s promoting the health, cultural and social benefits of its moderate consumption.

"He had an amazing life," said Robert C. Koch, president and CEO of the San Francisco-based Wine Institute. "He was a major driving force and an incredible promoter for California wine and the Napa Valley."

Born in Virginia, Minn., Mondavi got an economics degree

from Stanford University in the 1930s and went to work at the Charles Krug Winery, which his Italian-born parents had bought after moving to California from Minnesota.

He married his high school sweetheart, Marjorie Declusin, in 1937, and they had three children, Michael, Marcia and Tim.

For 20 years, the winery was a family business. But Robert clashed frequently with his younger brother, Peter, who had a more conservative approach to the business. According to Robert Mondavi's autobiography "Harvests of Joy," matters came to a head with a November 1965 fistfight.

"When it was all over, there were no apologies and no handshake," wrote Robert Mondavi.

In the late 1970s, Mondavi's first marriage ended; in his autobiography he wrote that his single-minded pursuit of the wine business was partly to blame. In 1980, he married a second time, to Margrit Biever, a native of Switzerland who had worked at the Mondavi winery since the late '60s.

By the mid-1990s, Mondavi had turned over operation of the company to his sons. But like their father and uncle before them, Tim and Michael clashed over management styles.

More troubles emerged as a grape glut soured the wine market in 2002 and lower-priced wines in the Mondavi portfolio faced tough competition from cheaper Australian imports and domestic brands like California's Two Buck Chuck.

Also a problem were the millions in charitable donations Mondavi and Margrit had

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American actress Eva Longoria arrives for the premiere of the film "Kung Fu Panda" during the 61st International film festival in Cannes, southern France, on Thursday, May 15, 2008.

Eva Longoria Parker: not a fashion diva at home

CANNES, France (AP)—Eva Longoria Parker gets to play dress-up at the Cannes Film Festival—and she doesn't even have to pack her own suitcase.

"My bag is packed when I come because my stylist thinks about every event we have, every interview, every red carpet—everything is already planned and dresses are fitted, and I just put on what somebody gives me," the 33-year-old actress told Associated Press Television.

Longoria Parker, who is hitting the red carpet for L'Oréal, is having a Versace moment at Cannes. But when she's at home with her husband, San Antonio Spurs point guard Tony Parker, she's hardly a fashion diva.

"I actually put on what's clean," she said Thursday. "Usually I'm in sweats or jeans. Tony's favorite outfit is me in jeans and a T-shirt."

Longoria Parker stars on ABC's "Desperate Housewives."

CALIF

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pledged, including helping found Copia, The American Center for Wine, Food and the Arts, in Napa and giving \$35 million to the University of California, Davis.

In her 2007 book, "The House of Mondavi: The Rise and Fall of an American Wine Dynasty," author Julia Flynn Siler wrote that declining stock prices later left Mondavi in danger of not being able to cover the millions in gifts he and Margrit had promised.

A corporate restructuring in August 2004 boosted the stock price, but undercut the family's control of the company. By time it was bought out, Michael Mondavi, who disagreed with the board strategy, had already left the company, and Tim Mondavi had loosened ties.

Later there was a bittersweet family moment when Robert and Peter Mondavi, aided by members of the younger generation, made wine together for the first time in 40 years. Using a 50-50 split of grapes from Robert Mondavi and Peter Mondavi family vineyards, the brothers made one barrel of a cabernet blend that sold for \$401,000 at the 2005 Napa Valley wine auction.

The auction lot was called "Ancora Una Volta," or "Once Again."

What's Indy up to? Secrecy shrouds 'Crystal Skull'

CANNES, France (AP)—Indiana Jones doesn't give up his secrets lightly, and neither does the man pulling his strings.

Director Steven Spielberg has tried to keep chapter four of the archaeologist's big-screen adventures, "Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull," under wraps as tight as an ancient mummy's.

The stealth approach has whipped up a frenzy of expectation—and doubts about the movie's quality—as he prepares to unveil it in front of the world's toughest audience, critics at the Cannes Film Festival. The film premieres here Sunday, just four days before it opens in theaters worldwide.

In an era of Internet spoilers, fan blogging and online video diaries where filmmakers show off their tricks, Indy returns with the old-fashioned covertness Spielberg always has favored.

"He is the only one in the world who keeps his cards face down on the table until the 11th hour, 59th minute, 59th second, and nothing deters him from doing that," said Jeffrey Katzenberg, Spielberg's partner at DreamWorks.

Revealing their cards at Cannes, with its notoriously snooty press corps, is a critical risk for Spielberg, executive producer George Lucas and star Harrison Ford.

Hollywood trade paper Variety quipped that Indiana Jones was entering the "Kingdom of the Critical Knives," and reporters have joked that Cannes might prove a new Temple of Doom for Indy.

Two years ago, the first press screening of "The Da Vinci Code" drew open laughter from Cannes critics, whose harsh reviews spoiled the film's premiere a day later and set the stage for a worldwide critical drubbing.

Of course, "The Da Vinci Code" went on to gross \$758 million globally. As the first movie in 19 years for one of cinema's biggest adventure series, "Crystal Skull" is virtually assured of blockbuster results, too.

Possibly to shield "Crystal Skull" from a similar critical backlash, Spielberg, Lucas and distributor Paramount

were letting critics see the movie until hours before its Cannes premiere.

In an unusual move, the few cast and crew interviews at Cannes were scheduled Saturday, before reporters

for why I wasn't in it, and I was finding it excruciating to have to do that."

In its earliest incarnation, Lucas proposed an all-out alien flick called "Indiana Jones and the Saucer Men From

From the trailers and studio press materials, the basic story line is out there—Indy and Soviet agents led by Cate Blanchett pursue a crystal skull that can bestow fantastic power on those returning it to a city of solid gold in the Amazon from where it was stolen.

Secrets remain, such as how Indy and Marion are reunited and whether co-star Shia LaBeouf is playing the love child of their "Raiders" romance.

Spielberg was incensed last year when an extra leaked plot details, and the filmmakers have scrambled to maintain the mystery.

"It's been insane," said Frank Marshall, producer on the "Indiana Jones" movies. "I've spent a great deal of time on this movie just trying to keep things off the Internet. That's totally new for us. There seems to be some kind of sport out there now to see who can put up a spoiler, which is not fair to the audience. We really tried to keep the lid on the story just for the audience's sake."

Accustomed to fan gripes from his "Star Wars" prequels, Lucas has downplayed expectations for "Crystal Skull," saying audiences will be disappointed if they're anticipating a cinematic Second Coming.

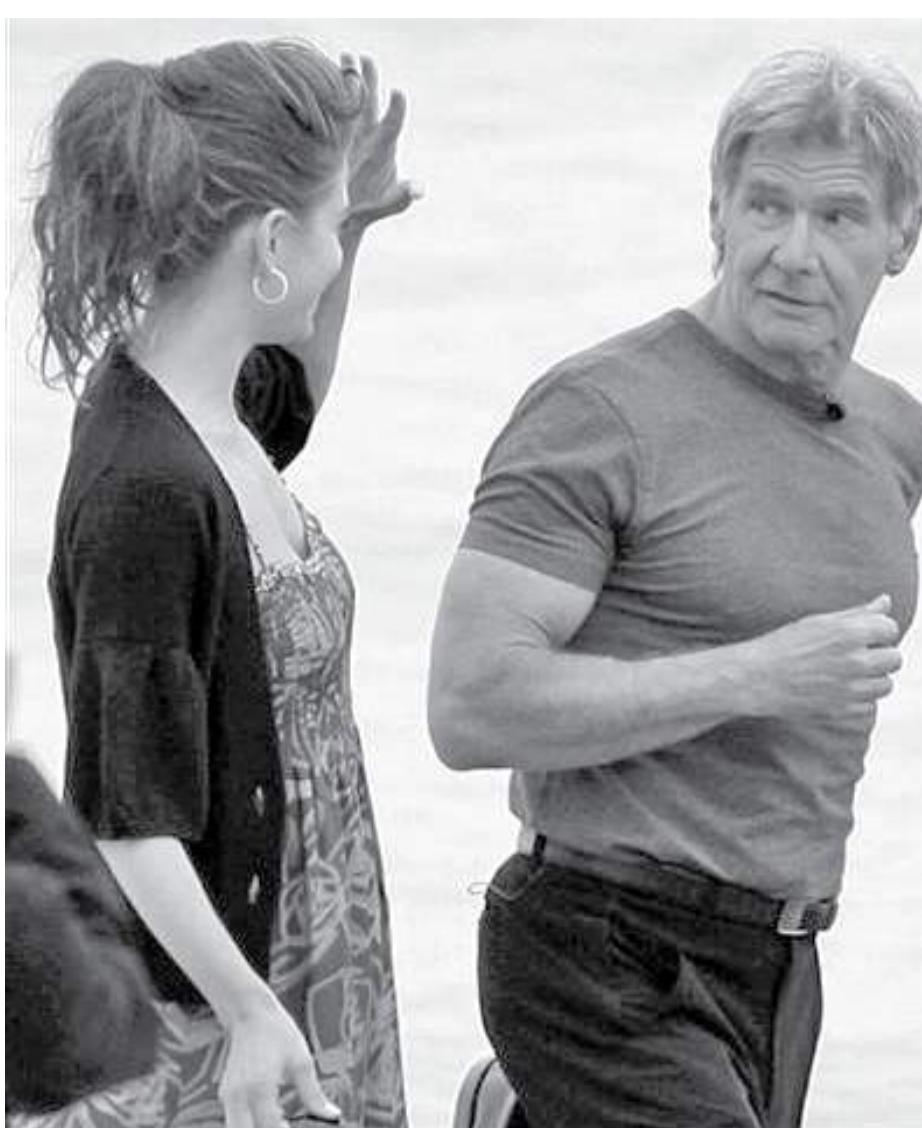
Such remarks could just be part of Lucas and Spielberg's strategy to keep fans guessing.

"There's a little P.T. Barnum in both of them. They know how to get you interested," said "Crystal Skull" screenwriter David Koepp. "There's nothing more interesting than saying, 'You can't see what's under here. I'd love to show you what's behind there, but I just can't.'"

Even a short behind-the-scenes segment on the official "Indiana Jones" Web site doesn't show much from behind the scenes. It focuses mainly on Spielberg in generic filmmaking mode, revealing virtually nothing about the action, ending with a close-up of Spielberg finishing a shot.

"And cut," Spielberg says. "Very nice."

The tough crowd at Cannes will have something to say about that Sunday.



American TV personality Maria Menounos and American actor Harrison Ford during an interview on the beach at the 61st International film festival in Cannes, southern France, on Friday, May 16, 2008.

had even seen the film. The movie's profile is so high, the filmmakers figure it doesn't need the usual publicity.

Spielberg has been hush-hush from the start. Co-star Karen Allen, reprising her "Raiders of the Lost Ark" role as Indy's old flame Marion Ravenwood, said Spielberg initially wanted to keep it a secret that she was even in "Crystal Skull."

"Even after the film was announced, people would call me. 'Oh, it's too bad you're not going to be in the film,'" Allen said. "I had to go along with it and say, 'Yeah, it's a shame.' When it was finally announced I was in it, it was a huge relief. I was having to make up stories

Mars." Spielberg and Ford didn't like that idea, and it took more than a decade of wrangling to come up with a story all three could live with.

A trailer showing a crate marked "Roswell, New Mexico, 1947"—a mecca for UFO buffs—hints that the movie retains traces of its extraterrestrial origins. Remarks by Lucas that the new film took its cue from 1950s sci-fi tales backs up that notion.

"The B-movies of the '50s were crazy science-fiction films, 'It Came From Outer Space' and 'Them!' and I said, 'Well, gee, I could use that as the basis of the genre that I was using as my reference,'" Lucas said.

Sarah Jessica Parker: She's not a slave to fashion



U.S. actress Sarah Jessica Parker arrives at the German premiere of the movie "Sex and the City" in Berlin, on Thursday, May 15, 2008.

BERLIN (AP)—Sarah Jessica Parker says she's not a slave to fashion like her "Sex and the City" character Carrie Bradshaw.

"I am a mother, wife and working woman in the first place, clothes do not play such a big role in my life than they do in Carrie's," the 43-year-old actress told The Associated Press after the Berlin premiere of her upcoming film based on the popular HBO series.

"And there is no favorite designer or accessory as there is Manolo Blahnik for Carrie—there are so many talented and exciting designers, I could not possibly choose one favorite," Parker said Friday, sporting a white petticoat with a black girdle and black stiletto heels.

The Berlin premiere came as part of a whirlwind courtship of Europe where the TV series, which ran from 1998 to

2004, still has an enthusiastic fan base.

Joining Parker on the red carpet Thursday night were co-stars Kim Cattrall, Cynthia Nixon and Kristin Davis.

The movie begins in the present, with the characters older and more thoughtful than their younger selves. Carrie, now in her early 40s, is a contributing editor to *Vogue* and a best-selling writer. She's got more money, and she's also got Mr. Big (Chris Noth), her longtime love.

Directed by Michael Patrick King, the film is all about finding the happy ending—but it has some surprising twists.

Still, it might be too early to talk about a sequel.

"We have not discussed this," Parker said.

"Sex and the City" opens May 30 in the U.S.

DeGeneres, de Rossi engaged after Calif. ruling

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Ellen DeGeneres and longtime girlfriend Portia de Rossi are jumping at the chance to get married. DeGeneres announced their engagement during a Thursday taping of "The Ellen DeGeneres Show," telling the studio audience the news that the California Supreme Court had struck down state laws against gay marriage.

"So I would like to say now, for the first time, I am announcing: I am getting married," she said during the show, airing Friday.

The studio audience leapt to its feet for a long ovation, and De Rossi ("Ally McBeal," "Nip/Tuck") was sitting in the audience, beaming and clapping.

Then DeGeneres cracked: "Thank you. I'll tell you who the lucky guy is soon."

The court ruling means same-sex couples could tie the knot in as little as a month. However, religious and social conservatives are seeking to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot in November that would undo the Supreme Court ruling and ban gay marriage.

DeGeneres, 50, has boldly



In this 2008 file photo actress Portia de Rossi, left, and television personality Ellen DeGeneres arrive at the 19th Annual GLAAD Media Awards on Saturday, April 26, 2008, in the Hollywood section of Los Angeles.

used TV before to make a stand for gay rights.

In 1997, she brought her character on the ABC sitcom "Ellen" out of the closet, making the show the first on prime-time network TV to have an openly gay lead. The move drew cheers from gay civil rights organizations but was condemned by some religious groups.

A month before, DeGeneres had proclaimed from the cover of Time magazine that she was a lesbian.

DeGeneres, 50, and the glamorous de Rossi, 35, have been a familiar couple at Hollywood events, including the Academy Awards. Previously, DeGeneres had a high-profile relationship with actress Anne Heche.

In a 2005 interview with Allure magazine, the comedian said she hoped she and de Rossi are "together the rest of our lives."

"I never would have thought my life would have turned out this way," DeGeneres told the magazine. "To have money. Or to have a gorgeous girlfriend. I just feel so lucky with everything in my life right now."



In this Dec 16, 2007, file photo American Idol winner Taylor Hicks performs on stage during Asian Idol in Jakarta, Indonesia. Hicks is going from "Idol" to "Angel."

Moore: 'Fahrenheit 9/11' follow-up is not a sequel

CANNES, France (AP)—With his follow-up to "Fahrenheit 9/11," Michael Moore wants to examine America as an empire, study its standing since the Sept. 11 attacks and present revelations to surprise audiences as much as the first film did.

But he doesn't want to make a sequel.

"To just say it's a sequel is so wrong," Moore told The Associated Press on Friday at the Cannes Film Festival, where he met with potential international distributors for the film, due out in 2009.

The documentary announced this week at Cannes will be a broader chronicle than "Fahrenheit 9/11," which took President Bush to task over the terrorist attacks and the Iraq war.

"It would be easier and safer to make a sequel, if that's all it was, but this isn't about Bush. We all know this. Regardless of who the president is come November, we have a big mess, a big, big mess to be cleaned up, and I don't know whether it can be cleaned up," Moore said. "The toxicity of the spill may be so great that there's nothing we can do about it. If that's the case, where are we now as America and as Americans?"

"Fahrenheit 9/11" won the top prize at Cannes in 2004 and went on to top \$100 million at the domestic box office, the only documentary to hit that mark.

Moore plans to keep details of the film to himself, saying he regretted talking too early about his health-care documentary

"Sicko." Health insurers were able to mobilize against him, which "made it impossible for me to get in anywhere" for interviews, he said.

The new film, which doesn't yet have a title, is being financed by Overture Films, which is handling the U.S. release, and Paramount Vantage, which is overseeing international distribution.

Chris McGurk, chief executive officer of Overture, said the new film will be something of a culmination of Moore's previous work, which includes the General Motors tale "Roger & Me" and the Academy Award-winning gun-control documentary "Bowling for Columbine."

"The country has sort of been

rotting from within, and the culprits are big business, big corporations, kind of the conservative government," McGurk said. "'Bowling for Columbine,' 'Sicko,' 'Roger and Me' all could have been episodes inside the context of this film."

While Moore said the new film would go beyond Bush, he dropped strong hints that the president would remain in his sights.

"Our biggest enemy that we should have been afraid of during these last eight years was perhaps an internal one, and I don't mean ourselves," Moore said. "I mean people that were up to absolutely no good when it came to what was best for this country and best for the world."



In this May 23, 2004 file photo, American film director Michael Moore gestures while presenting his Palme d'Or trophy for his documentary film "Fahrenheit 9/11" as he climbs the steps of the festival palace during the closing ceremony of the 57th International Film Festival in Cannes, southern France.

"It's my sincere hope that next Jan. 20, it's not just a transition taking place at the White House, where the U-Haul pulls up to take his stuff to Crawford (Texas). I think there should be a perp-walk coming out of the West Wing. The crimes that these people have committed go far beyond - and I'm not saying it on any kind of an emotional level or what my feelings are about Bush or whatever. I think there are very specific things that need to be looked at in terms of what they've done."

Moore, 54, scolded Hollywood for shying away from the Iraq War early on. He said "Fahrenheit 9/11" was the only war film to become a hit because it came out at a time when it touched a nerve, prompting people to question U.S. military action.

A recent wave of Iraq-themed movies bombed because support for the war has dwindled and most Americans now oppose it, he said.

"Because they didn't have the courage to put these films out when they were needed, the public didn't get to see them, the war continued," Moore said. "When they finally started putting them out really last year and into this year, 70 percent of the public was against the war. Seventy percent of the public already knew that the war was no good, and they didn't need to spend Friday night at a movie theater after they've been working hard all week to sit there and be told this war is really a bad idea."

Taylor Hicks to play Teen Angel in Broadway's 'Grease'

NEW YORK (AP)—Taylor Hicks is going from "Idol" to "Angel."

The "American Idol" alum will join the Broadway cast of "Grease" on June 6, playing Teen Angel in the revival of the popular musical.

The gray-haired singer—whose "Idol" fan base was called "The Soul Patrol"—said he plans to add "soulful flavor" to his performance of "Beauty School Dropout." The flashy role, he said, is "a classic fit for a classic performer."

"It's a big number, and, you know, I've made some pretty grand entrances before," Hicks told The Associated Press on Thursday. "And this one is probably the grandest entrance I've had in my career."

Well, besides "Idol." Hicks, 31, took home the title in the fifth season of the top-rated Fox show—the biggest stage on television.

He later lost his record deal with J Records, a label within Sony-BMG, which signs the show's singers, and had been looking for the perfect part to make his debut on The Great White Way.

"If you're gonna be a great entertainer and you're gonna be a great performer, than these are the things that you have to do to season yourself in that manner," said Hicks, who views this "opportunity of a lifetime" as a way to improve his "Idol"-based skills.

The Alabama-born crooner's run ends Sept. 7. He'll be the latest "Idol" to hit Broadway, following runs by season-three winner Fantasia Barrino ("The Color Purple") and a host of also-rans including Clay Aiken ("Spamalot"), Diana DeGarmo ("Hairspray") and Constantine Maroulis ("The Wedding Singer").

Hicks' self-titled, post-"Idol" album, released in December 2006, has sold a respectable 702,000 copies, according to Nielsen Soundscan data. But it didn't reach the 1 million mark or register a hit song, unlike previous "Idol" winners.

This summer, Hicks intends to finish up a follow-up album—on his own terms.

"I've had the creative freedom and the time to write some of the best music that I've ever written in my whole life. ... The options are unlimited and there has been some great interest now that I'm a free agent, so to speak," he said.

Signs point to imminent Simpson-Wentz wedding

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Though Ashlee Simpson and Pete Wentz are keeping a tight lid on their nuptials, it's looking like a wedding is imminent. Aerial photos posted Friday at several celebrity Web sites, credited to the Insight News & Features paparazzi photo agency, purport to show the Simpson family home near Los Angeles dotted with large white party tents.

People.com reported that Wentz and Simpson's father, Joe Simpson, had dinner Thursday night at celebrity eatery Mr. Chow before celebrating the Fall Out Boy bassist's bachelor party. The Web site posted photos, also credited to INF, of the two emerging from the Beverly Hills restaurant Thursday, saying they were partying "days before" the wedding.

An Associated Press reporter witnessed more than 30 photographers waiting outside the res-

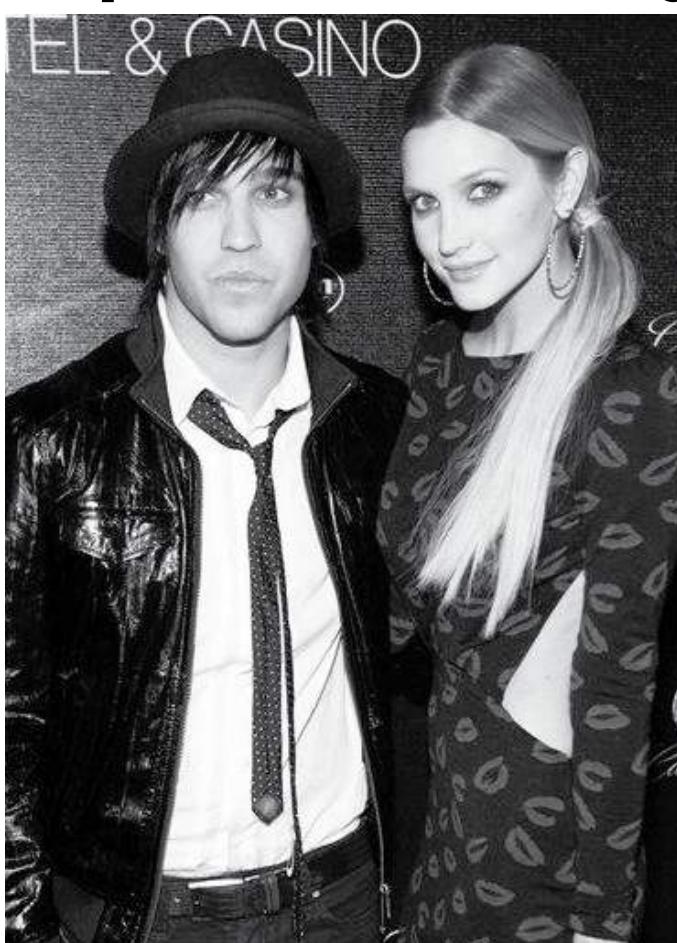
taurant Thursday night.

Simpson's publicist declined to comment on the couple's wedding plans.

"This is a private matter," Rhett Usry said in an e-mail to The Associated Press. "There is nothing to confirm at this time." A representative for Fall Out Boy told the AP that she had no information.

Simpson, 23, and Wentz, 28, began dating in fall 2006 and announced their engagement April 9. Rumors that Simpson is pregnant soon followed, but the couple has denied that they are expecting a child.

Simpson, a singer, songwriter and actress, is the younger sister of pop star Jessica Simpson. Ashlee Simpson's latest album, "Bittersweet World," was released last month. It peaked at No. 4 on the Billboard 200 in its first week, and tracks have logged more than 19 million plays on her MySpace page.



In this Sept. 8, 2007 file photo, Ashlee Simpson and her boyfriend Pete Wentz, of the band Fall Out Boy, arrive together at the Rolling Stone 40th anniversary party in Las Vegas. AP

Marcia Cross drops a few hints about Bree's future



In this Jan. 27, 2008 file photo, Marcia Cross arrives at the 14th Annual Screen Actors Guild Awards in Los Angeles. AP

WASHINGTON (AP)—It's true: "Desperate Housewives" will flash-forward five years.

Marcia Cross, who plays domestic goddess Bree on the ABC comedy-drama, told AP Radio in a recent phone interview that a flash-forward narrative device will offer viewers a glimpse into the future lives of the Wisteria Lane gang.

Spoiler alert: Read no further if you don't want to know what happens to some of the central characters.

Cross said her character

makes "a big leap."

"She's gone out into the world and she's become a bit of a success," the 46-year-old actress said.

When asked if that success has anything to do with the catering business Bree started with her neighbor Katherine (Dana Delany), Cross replied, "It does have to do with the business. Bree definitely has made a name for herself."

And Bree—the embodiment of preppy style—will change her look.

"Let's put it this way, the (hair) flip has died and I'm so happy about that," Cross said.

She also revealed that Eva Longoria Parker's character, Gabrielle, "has had some children."

When asked what becomes of the troublesome Kayla (Rachel Fox), who is Tom's (Doug Savant) daughter, Cross said, "She hightails it out of town or is hightailed out of town."

The season finale of "Desperate Housewives" airs Sunday.

Daytime's 'The View' to go backstage for 1 show



In this April 9, 2008 file photo, hosts of ABC's "The View", from left, Elisabeth Hasselbeck, Joy Behar, Whoopi Goldberg, Barbara Walters and Sherri Shepherd attend a panel discussion at The Paley Center for Media in New York. AP

ing where the co-hosts discuss in advance what they'll be talk-

Jury selection in the R&B singer's trial finished this week. Opening arguments begin Tuesday.

Singer R. Kelly, left, arrives with bodyguards for the second day of jury selection in his child pornography trial at the Cook County Criminal Courthouse in Chicago, Monday, May 12, 2008. AP

Judge denies media motion in R. Kelly trial

CHICAGO (AP)—A judge has denied a motion from news organizations seeking immediate access to sealed court records and transcripts in the R. Kelly child pornography trial.

Judge Vincent Gaughan (GAWN) also refused to lift a gag order forbidding attorneys to talk about the case.

The judge says he's not trying to inhibit the press. But he says the time isn't right to release the information and keeping it secret is the only way to guarantee a fair trial.

Kelly has pleaded not guilty to charges he videotaped himself having sex with an underage girl.



Heart surgery fails to cure husband's love for cigarettes

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: Last year, my husband, "Steve," was scheduled for bypass surgery. He told everyone—all our friends and relatives—that he planned to stop smoking afterward. It has now been nine months, and as recently as last week Steve and I were discussing his amazing willpower with friends.

Several times over the past few weeks, I had remarked to my husband that his clothes smelled of smoke. He said, "I don't know why they would." I have also told Steve I was concerned because he has developed a deep, productive cough and urged him to see his doctor about it. Last night he became angry with me and told me I am always "borrowing trouble."

This morning I moved his bathrobe and found a pack of cigarettes in the pocket. I'm a retired nurse. I know how dangerous the game he's playing is. It's as if he doesn't care.

Not only do I not want to lose my husband, our finances are very stressed right now. Steve says this is none of my business. How can I make him see what a dangerous game he's playing? Or do I just shut up and start planning his funeral?

—HURT AND DISGUSTED, WOODBURY, TENN.

DEAR HURT AND DISGUSTED: Face it, your husband is addicted to nicotine. You can order printed materials from the Heart Association, the American Lung Association and the American Cancer Society about the dangers of smoking, but unless he is willing to give up tobacco, nothing will get through to him.

By all means start planning his funeral. By starting now you will have a better chance of managing the costs. In addition, talk to your insurance agent about increasing his life insurance, if that's possible. It might also be a good idea to explore part-time employment opportunities, should the need arise.

Believe me, you have my sympathy. If one life-threatening health scare wasn't enough to convince your husband to quit smoking, then nothing will.

DEAR ABBY: Our mother was killed in a car accident two years ago. A woman I'll call "Tiffany" was driving at a high rate of speed and ran a stop sign. To this day, our family has yet to hear one word of regret from her, and we are finding it hard not to hate her.

My mother died a horrible and painful death. Tiffany destroyed many lives with her "mistake," yet she walked away from the wreck physically, mentally and financially untouched. We understand the meaning of the word "accident." We know she didn't mean to kill our mother, but an apology would have been nice. Even after two years of counseling we are still bitter and need to hear Tiffany say she is sorry. Have you any advice for us?

—STILL GRIEVING IN AMARILLO

DEAR STILL GRIEVING: Please accept my deepest sympathy for the tragedy that befell your family. Under the circumstances, your feelings are understandable, and it may take still more counseling for you to work through what happened and achieve acceptance. Please do not think that the driver of that car is insensitive to your pain and grief. It is likely that she has not contacted you because she was strongly advised against it by legal counsel.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more attractive person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

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Pats' Belichick lashes out at ex-video assistant

BOSTON (AP)—New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick lashed out at the team's former video assistant Friday, saying in a televised interview that Matt Walsh was a low-level staffer who was fired for "poor job performance." "There's not a lot of credibility," Belichick said in an interview broadcast on "CBS Evening News."

"You know, he's tried to make it seem like we're buddies, and belong to the same book club and all. That's really a long, long stretch."

Belichick acknowledged that he was wrong about NFL rules prohibiting filming opponents signals but insisted there was no intent to hide what he was doing.

"I made a mistake," he said in the interview. "I was wrong. I was wrong."

That rationale has already been rejected by NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, who fined the coach \$500,000 and docked the Patriots \$250,000 and its first-round draft pick.

"I didn't accept Bill Belichick's explanation for what happened," Goodell said Tuesday, "and I still don't to this day."

But Belichick repeated that Walsh had been fired for "poor job performance" and for making a tape recording of a meeting with player personnel director Scott Pioli. Belichick has said he didn't even know Walsh.

"For him to talk about game-planning and strategy and play-calling and how he advised coordinators, it's embarrassing; it's absurd," Belichick said. "He didn't have any knowledge of football. He was our third video assistant."

In an interview with HBO sched-



Former New England Patriots videotape operator Matt Walsh, left, arrives at NFL headquarters for a meeting with NFL commissioner Roger Goodell, Tuesday, May 13, 2008, in New York.

uled to air Friday night on "Real Sports With Bryant Gumbel," Walsh dismissed Belichick's attempts to minimize the impact of the taping. Walsh told HBO he was coached on how to evade NFL rules, and that team officials instructed him on ways to avoid detection.

"When I was doing it, I understood what we were doing to be wrong."

Walsh said. "Coach Belichick's explanation for having misinterpreted the rules, to me, that really didn't sound like taking responsibility for what we had done, especially considering the great lengths that we had gone through to hide what we were doing."

Belichick denied telling Walsh to hide what he was doing.

"You look at the tape. You see him

filming the game," the coach told CBS. "You tell me how discrete it is."

Belichick's comments came on the same day the Boston Herald printed a front-page story by John Tomase, who wrote on the day before New England's Super Bowl loss to the New York Giants that the Patriots had taped the St. Louis Rams' walkthrough before the 2002 NFL title game.

Magowan stepping down as Giants' managing partner

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Peter Magowan, the owner who brought Barry Bonds to San Francisco, built a new ballpark and kept major league baseball in the city, is stepping down as managing partner of the Giants.

The 66-year-old Magowan will retire from his duties at the end of the season on Oct. 1 but maintain an ownership stake, the team said Friday.

"I feel happy, I feel relieved, in some ways I feel a little bit nostalgic," Magowan said. "The memories I have are some very, very good memories and some memories not so good."

American Bar Association president and longtime Microsoft attorney Bill Neukom, a current partner in the Giants group, will take over for Magowan. Also, executive vice president Larry Baer will become team president effective Oct. 1.

These changes are subject to the approval of Major League Baseball. The Giants expect that to happen when the owners next meet, Aug. 13-14 in Washington.

"I couldn't resist it," Neukom said of the opportunity. "I couldn't have done this a year ago."

Magowan informed the ownership group of his decision during a meeting Friday morning. He plans to spend more time with his family once he's through, including seeing more of his 10 grandchildren.

"I'm sure there are a lot of you who

will say there have to be other reasons," he said. "You're fed up with last place or the Bonds investigations or the Mitchell Report or Bud Selig or whatever. And I'm going to tell you whether you believe it or not, it's the truth for me, that's not right. I'm leaving because I think the time is right for me and my family."

Combined with his time running Safeway, Magowan said he's spent "29 years in a true pressure-packed environment."

Magowan, one of the more public owners in baseball, was mentioned in the Mitchell Report that came out in December. Magowan then met with commissioner Bud Selig during spring training about whether members of the Giants' front office knew players were allegedly using steroids and performance-enhancing drugs.

Magowan said Friday he doesn't believe Mitchell included the Giants' side of the story in his report.

"I don't like my name put out there like it was," Magowan said. "The Mitchell thing, there's another side to all of this that has never come out. I had an opportunity to give that side, and I gave it to a good man. It didn't come out. ... The damage has already been done."

The decision to bring Bonds to San Francisco came soon after Magowan bought the team before the 1993 season. The Giants were close to moving to Florida before Magowan's group bought the team from Bob Lurie.

"Peter Magowan will always be re-

membered in the San Francisco Bay area for saving baseball in 1992 and for preserving the game for the next two generations of San Francisco fans by building the beautiful ballpark by the bay," Selig said. "During his 16 years with the Giants, he has made a great impact in the community and within the game. Personally, I will miss Peter. I will miss his wisdom and his counsel. I am grateful, though, that he leaves the ballclub in the very capable hands of Bill Neukom."

The addition of Bonds revitalized baseball in San Francisco and contributed to the opening of the franchise's privately funded waterfront ballpark in 2000. Last summer, the Giants hosted the All-Star game.

Bonds became baseball's home run king last year. He has since been indicted, accused of lying to a grand jury about his alleged use of performance-enhancing drugs.

Magowan parted ways with the slugger and seven-time NL MVP in September, about a month after Bonds broke Hank Aaron's record with No. 756.

The Giants made the playoffs four times under Magowan's rule. In 2002, they came close to winning their first World Series since moving West in 1958, falling five outs short in Game 6 against the Angels. He called that his "biggest regret."

"That hurts not winning the World Series," he said.

He might have walked away then

had the Giants won a ring, and that's when he first contacted Neukom about becoming his successor. Magowan and his wife, Debby, discussed the idea of him slowing down again around Christmas time and ultimately made the decision.

Magowan also signed left-hander Barry Zito to a \$126 million, seven-year contract before the 2007 season. It was the richest deal ever for a pitcher before his contract was topped by the Mets' Johan Santana and his \$137.5 million deal.

"The Barry Zito signing, you have to say at this point, is clearly a failure," Magowan said. "That doesn't mean that I believe at the end of the day, and the day is a long way off - a seven-year contract - we will say it was a failure."

The 66-year-old Neukom, a member of the Giants' ownership group since 1995 and a general partner since 2003, grew up in nearby San Mateo. He is a partner in the Seattle office of the international law firm Kirkpatrick & Lockhart Preston Gates Ellis. His tenure as president of the bar association ends Aug. 12.

"Like Peter, I have been a Giants fan almost my entire life," Neukom said. "While no one will be able to match what Peter has accomplished these past 16 years, I am excited about the opportunity before me, and I look forward to continuing the great work of this organization."

Baer began his tenure with the Giants in 1993 along with Magowan.

NFL owners may opt out of labor deal next week

NEW YORK (AP)—NFL owners could opt out of their agreement with the players union next week, leaving open the possibility of a 2010 season without a salary cap. The labor agreement is on the agenda for the league meetings in Atlanta on Tuesday.

"If they don't do it next week then it will be soon after that," Gene Upshaw, the executive director of the NFL Players Association, said Friday. "They want to opt out and we don't."

In the agreement signed in March of 2006, both sides were given the right to get out of the deal by Nov. 8, 2008. League officials noted that doesn't mean that a decision could not be made earlier.

That contract was due to expire at the end of the 2013 season. If the owners nullify it, a move that has seemed inevitable for a while, it would end after the 2011 season with 2010 being uncapped.

The end of the agreement does not necessarily mean that there will be a work stoppage, although Upshaw has predicted that the owners could lock out the players in 2011. But the early opt out also could lead to earlier talks on a new deal, which the owners feel has leaned too far toward the players—Upshaw already has had several preliminary meetings, including one recently with Jerry Richardson of Carolina and Pat Bowlen of Denver, two of the owners expected to be involved in the negotiations.

And despite predictions that owners with more cash would corner the market on star players in an uncapped year, there are safeguards against that, notably a provision in the contract, first signed in 1993, that extends the period needed from free agency from four years to six if that happens.

The early termination of the labor contract has been expected for at least the last six months.

Several owners have complained that the current deal, which gives 60 percent of the revenues to the players, has been too one-sided. It was done at the last moment and was the last major act of former commissioner Paul Tagliabue, who managed to put together a coalition of high-revenue, middle-revenue and low-revenue teams to ratify the contract.

Only two low revenue teams, Cincinnati and Buffalo, voted against it.

Since then, however, high-revenue owners, such as New England's Robert Kraft, have also supported negotiating for a new deal. And if a vote is taken, 24 of the 32 teams would have to vote to extend it, something that is highly unlikely to happen.

One problem, league officials note, are rising and unpredictable bond rates, which leave teams like Dallas and the New York Giants and Jets, who are building new stadiums, with rising costs and rising debt on their bonds. The Cowboys' Stadium is scheduled to open next season and host the 2011 Super Bowl and the new facility for the New York teams is scheduled to open in 2010.

Werth in record hitting display as Phillies down Blue Jays



PHILADELPHIA (AP)—

Jayson Werth homered in his first three at-bats and tied a Philadelphia Phillies record with eight RBIs in a 10-3 win over the Toronto Blue Jays in Major League Baseball interleague play Friday.

Werth had a chance to tie the major league record of four homers in a game, but he fouled out to first base in the seventh inning.

He became the 18th Phillies player to record three homers in a game and the first since 2006.

The eight RBIs tied a franchise record held by four players, most recently accomplished by Mike Schmidt in 1976.

Rays 3, Cardinals 1

In St. Louis, Tampa Bay continued its surprisingly strong start to the season, beating St. Louis to record its eighth win in nine games.

The Rays are eight games above .500 for the first time in franchise history.

Tampa Bay pitcher Andy Sonnanstine carried a shutout into the eighth inning, yielding just one run and no walks, and added two singles.

Rangers 16, Astros 8

In Arlington, Texas, Josh Hamilton went 5-for-5 with two homers and five RBIs as Texas downed state rival Houston.

Ian Kinsler scored the go-ahead run in the seventh inning, and the Rangers then broke out for a big win.

Angels 4, Dodgers 2

In Anaheim, California, Angels pitcher Joe Saunders bounced back from his lone loss of the year to down the Dodgers in an



AP

Philadelphia Phillies' Jayson Werth, left, talks to first base coach Jerry Martin after hit a two-run single against the Atlanta Braves in the fifth inning of an MLB baseball game Tuesday, May 13, 2008, in Philadelphia.

all-Los Angeles showdown.

Vladimir Guerrero drove in two runs without a hit for the Angels.

Saunders held the Dodgers to two runs—a two-run homer in the seventh—in 7 1-3 innings.

White Sox 2, Giants 0

In San Francisco, Alexei Ramirez hit his first major league homer, a two-run shot in the seventh—in 7 1-3 innings.

Delmon Young doubled twice and scored two runs for the Twins before closer Joe Nathan remained perfect in 13 save opportunities. Blackburn struck out five without a walk to help the Twins end a three-game skid.

The Giants had a baserunner aboard in every inning without managing a run.

Padres 6, Mariners 4

In Seattle, Brian Giles had four hits to lead San Diego over Seattle.

Tadahito Iguchi 2

In Denver, Nick Blackburn pitched seven strong innings to steer Minnesota past Colorado.

Eric Byrnes homered and had two RBIs for the Diamondbacks, who rallied from a 3-1 deficit with three runs in the seventh. They scored the go-ahead run on a two-out throwing error.

Twins 4, Rockies 2

In Phoenix, Arizona won its fourth straight by shading Detroit.

Adam Dunn homered and drew a tiebreaking walk with the bases loaded in the eighth

Royals 7, Marlins 6

In Miami, Kansas City extended its winning streak to five games by edging Florida.

Brett Tomko pitched six innings, allowing five hits, to record his first victory since early

April, and the Royals benefited from two unearned runs.

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Lakers hold off Jazz 108-105, reach West finals



SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Kobe Bryant scored 34 points and Los Angeles held off a furious rally by the Utah Jazz for a 108-105 victory Friday night, putting the Lakers in the Western Conference finals for the first time in four years.

The Jazz trailed by 19 at halftime and 16 at the end of the third quarter, but hit a flurry of 3-pointers to get within two points in the final minute. The Jazz had a chance to tie it at the end, but Mehmet Okur and Deron Williams missed 3-pointers in the closing seconds and Utah's season was over.

It was the only win by the visiting team in the series and kept the Lakers from having to host a Game 7 on Monday, instead giving Bryant a chance to rest his ailing back. The Lakers made 11 of 13 foul shots in the fourth quarter while barely holding off Utah's rally.

Bryant also had eight rebounds and six assists. Pau Gasol added 17 points and 13 rebounds for the Lakers, who get to sit back and wait for the winner of the San Antonio-New Orleans series, which will be decided with a Game 7 on Monday.

Williams led Utah with 21 points and 14 assists. Carlos Boozer had 12 points and 14 rebounds, and Okur had 16 points and 10 boards, hitting two 3-pointers in the fourth quarter during Utah's comeback. The Jazz were 5-for-8 from beyond the arc in the final period, but could not quite overcome the huge lead the Lakers had built through the first three quarters.

Los Angeles stopped Utah's pick-and-roll and just about everything else the Jazz tried inside until the fourth. The Jazz started hurrying outside shots, which weren't going in and the rebounds seemed to always bounce Gasol's way. Nine of his 11 rebounds in the first half were defensive.

The Lakers led 101-91 with about two minutes left when the Jazz made their last-gasp push. Okur hit two 3-pointers, then Andrei Kirilenko hit another to cut the lead to 103-100 after Millsap blocked a layup by Bryant. Odom hit two free throws, followed by another 3 by Kirilenko, then Bryant hit two more from the line to make it 107-103 with 15.5 seconds left.

The Jazz went for a quick two points and scored on a dunk by Williams, then got a break when Derek Fisher went 1-for-2 from the line. Utah just needed a 3-pointer and got two off, but missed both and the buzzer sounded.

Fisher, who played in Utah last season, and Williams hugged after the horn and the Utah fans cheered the Jazz loudly as they left the floor for the final time.

Cavaliers 74, Celtics 69

At Cleveland, the Cleveland Cavaliers packed for a weekend

Byrd, seeking his fourth victory on the U.S. golf tour, shared the lead with Kenny Perry, Ryan Palmer and two others when the second round began.

The course was drenched with more than 2.5 centimeters (an inch) of rain Thursday and, though no precipitation fell in the second round, overcast con-



Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant, left, talks with Utah Jazz guard Deron Williams (8) after Game 6 of the NBA basketball Western Conference semifinal series Friday, May 16, 2008, in Salt Lake City.

ditions kept the sun from drying off the fairways and greens and making the course play faster.

Perry and Palmer shot 69s to drop into a tie for second. Parker McLachlin, another first-round leader, shot a 70 to drop into a three-way tie for fourth with Charles Howell III (69) and David Toms (69) at 8 under.

On the road, they're 0-6 and just ordinary.

Still, the Celtics feel good about going home.

The Cavs are attempting to become the 14th team to overcome an 0-2 deficit and win a series, and to do so, the defending Eastern Conference champions will have to win in Boston, where the Celtics are 7-0 in the postseason and play like a team with title potential.

On the road, they're 0-6 and just ordinary.

Still, the Celtics feel good about going home.

"Mentally we feel like we're a confident team," Paul Pierce said. "We've been in Game 7s before, and we feel like this is a game we let slip away. Hopefully, we can go home and take care of business."

The Celtics are 15-3 in Game 7s at home, but the Cavaliers may have some confidence playing on the parquet after nearly winning Games 1 and 5.

Kevin Garnett scored 25 points, Pierce 16 and Ray Allen just nine on 3-of-8 shooting. The Celtics got just two points from guard Rajon Rondo, who scored 20 in their Game 5 win.

Boston's point total was the second lowest in franchise playoff history and the fewest points ever given up by Cleveland in the postseason.

Afterward, Celtics coach Doc Rivers was still fuming over some calls he felt went against his team.

"Tell the refs to do the interview. They were just as important," an angry Rivers shouted at a team official as he walked back from the postgame news conference.

James added 12 rebounds, Delonte West had 10 points and Smith came off the bench to add nine, none bigger than his two free throws that closed out the Celtics.

Cleveland's win continued a run of domination by home teams, who are now 21-1 on

their floors in the second round of the playoffs.

Leading by nine at halftime, the Cavs opened the third quarter with seven straight points from James to open a 51-36 lead.

But just when it appeared the Celtics were in major trouble, they responded behind Garnett, who scored eight points in a 13-0 spurt that pulled Boston within three. James finally ended Cleveland's offensive lapse with a layup and the Cavs got a tip-in and fling-in from Anderson Varejao for a 59-50 lead entering the fourth.

Garnett's jumper pulled the Celtics within 65-60 before James scored on a drive, and the All-Star hit an off-balance 17-foot jumper to make it 69-60. Eddie House made a 3-pointer for Boston, but Szczerbiak, who missed his first five 3-pointers, finally got one to go down, giving Cleveland a 72-63 lead.

Boston hung around as the Cavs came up empty on several possessions and was still within five when Pierce was whistled for a questionable charge. Allen made two free throws to bring Boston within 72-69, but Smith stepped to the line and as 20,000-plus fans fell deadly silent, made the two biggest free throws of his 13-year career.

When the final horn sounded, James fired the ball to the other end and the Cavs left their home floor hoping they

Mickelson's penchant for attacking a course ripe for low scores impressed Byrd.

"I watched him just kind of stay aggressive, stay aggressive, stay aggressive, and he kept making birdies," Byrd said. "And I just kept telling myself that today. It's windy, but the greens are soft, so I've got to keep trying to hit it close and keep trying to make birdies."

Byrd was upset with himself for

can get another chance to play on it again this season.

The Cavaliers played without injured guard Daniel Gibson, one of their best outside shooters who helped close out the Detroit Pistons in last year's conference finals. Gibson separated his left shoulder in Game 5.

But unlike in that loss, when they let the Celtics cut a 14-point deficit to three in the final few minutes before halftime, the Cavaliers closed the second period with a 17-2 flurry to open a 42-33 lead.

Sasha Pavlovic, getting more minutes with Gibson out, hit a 3-pointer and Zydrunas Ilgauskas dropped two jumpers on assists from James as the Cavs opened a three-point lead. After a defensive technical against Boston, James made two free throws with nine seconds left.

The Celtics set up a final shot, but West made a steal, dribbled quickly into the frontcourt and sank a running 3-pointer at the horn, giving the Cavs their nine-point lead and huge momentum.

As is his custom before big games, James arrived three hours before the opening tip to get in some extra shooting in the arena's fourth-floor practice gym.

James was confident the Cavaliers would be able to force a Game 7.

"I don't feel desperate at all," he said.

After speaking with reporters for a few minutes, James relaxed at his locker and unlaced three pairs of sneakers as he bobbed his head and rapped along with hip hop blaring through his headphones. However, he couldn't find his rhythm on the floor early on.

James went 1-for-6 in the first quarter before he began driving to the basket, something Cavs fans wish he did more often. He drew fouls and scored nine of his 13 first-half points from the foul line.

Unable to explain the Celtics' problems away from home, Rivers said he didn't do anything radical to end Boston's road slide. "We didn't hold a season," he said.

The Celtics will now conjure up some of the ghosts from their glorious past as they prepare for their second Game 7 in these playoffs.

"We wanted this one bad, but it's OK," Celtics forward Glen Davis said. "We've got to go home and win."

a mental lapse that led to a three-putt at the par-5 sixth. It marked the only hole he played over par in the second round and just his second of the tournament.

"You just can't give away shots in a PGA Tour event with guys that are this good," Byrd said. "And that was just a pure give-away. You do that in junior golf. You don't do that on the PGA Tour, but it happened and it might motivate me to play better."

Byrd shoots second straight 66 to take 3-stroke lead



DULUTH, Georgia (AP) —

Jonathan Byrd took advantage of soft fairways and receptive greens at TPC Sugarloaf on Friday, shooting his second straight 6-under 66 to take a three-stroke lead in the AT&T Classic.

Byrd, seeking his fourth victory on the U.S. golf tour, shared the lead with Kenny Perry, Ryan Palmer and two others when the second round began.

The course was drenched with more than 2.5 centimeters (an inch) of rain Thursday and, though no precipitation fell in the second round, overcast con-

ditions kept the sun from drying off the fairways and greens and making the course play faster.

Perry and Palmer shot 69s to drop into a tie for second. Parker McLachlin, another first-round leader, shot a 70 to drop into a three-way tie for fourth with Charles Howell III (69) and David Toms (69) at 8 under.

Belichick lashes out at ex-video assistant

New England Patriots coach Bill Belichick lashed out at the team's former video assistant Friday, saying in a televised interview that Matt Walsh was a low-level staffer who was fired for "poor job performance." **25**

Saipan Tribune Sports

28 SUNDAY, MAY 18, 2008

Lakers hold off Jazz 108-105, reach West finals

Kobe Bryant scored 34 points and Los Angeles held off a furious rally by the Utah Jazz for a 108-105 victory Friday night, putting the Lakers in the Western Conference finals for the first time in four years. **27**



SAIPAN TRIBUNE



The Dandan Tottot, left photo, and the Koblerville Lady Umangs celebrate their respective wins in the Public School System boys' and girls' division softball league on Friday at the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Field. **JON PEREZ**

Dandan, Kobler claim PSS softball crowns

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The elementary schools of Dandan and Koblerville won the boys' and girls' softball titles after beating separate opponents in Friday's finals of the 2008 Public School System Fast-pitch Softball League at the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Field.

The Dandan Tottot squeezed out a thrilling 2-1 win over the San Vicente Canaries in the boys' division while the Koblerville Umangs coasted to a 15-5 triumph over the Gregorio T. Camacho Binadu in the girls' class.

The Tottot-Canaries game was a pitching duel between the Dandan pair of Alex Monkeya and A.J. Hambros, and San Vicente's duo of Frankie Blas and James Gonzales.

Most of Dandan and San Vi-

cente's players are also seeing action in various teams in the Majors division of the Saipan Little League.

Monkeya pitched three innings in start for Dandan yielding one earned run on six hits with strikeout and no walks. Hambros pitched four one-hit innings in relief with one strikeout and no walks.

Blas and Gonzales divided pitching duties for San Vicente combining for one earned run on four hits with one strikeout and four walks.

But Tottot second baseman L.J. Hemley made the game-winning play in the bottom of the seventh to bring the championship trophy to Dandan.

Gonzales and the San Vicente defense quickly got the two outs in the bottom of the seventh to fan the Canaries' hopes of sending the game into an extra inning.



He gave up consecutive walks to Hambros and Daniel Smith.

But the Canaries defense responded as San Vicente catcher Tommy Reyes threw to second baseman Blas to prevent Hambros from advancing to second for the first out.

Shortstop Thomas Reyes and Tommy Aldan caught Smith on a rundown throwing with the latter making the tag for the second out.

Then everything went wrong for the Canaries after that.

Hemley took a 2-2 count and connected on Gonzales' sixth pitch for a single when he found a gap between second and third base. Hemley then advanced to second on a Jose Lizama fielder's choice and moved to third on an error by San Vicente third baseman Aldan.

Esiah Cruz was safe on first in that Aldan error. Hemley then

took advantage of the confusion that took place with the Canaries and stole home to end the game as he was greeted by his teammates at the plate.

Dandan was the first different champion after nine years. Koblerville held the title for nine years with their bid of a 10th straight crown being derailed after a 1-2 loss to eventual champions Tottot.

The Umangs' first 11 hits in the semifinal match against the Tottot were all pop flies.

Koblerville 15, GTC 5

Earlier, the Koblerville Lady Umangs ended its years of frustration to score a 15-5 rout of the GTC Binadu.

The Lady Umangs were undefeated last year but lost to 2007 champions Oleai Turtles in the semis. They settled in third place after that dumping

See DANDAN on Page 26

OFF THE BENCH

By BOB COLDEEN

Coldeen is a longtime sports journalist in the CNMI and is the news and sports director of the Flame Tree Network.



Away, sour away

If "Home, Sweet Home" is a favorite way to describe home field advantage in sports, then why do we never hear the opposite, and equally true, "Away, Sour Away"?

Whatever advantage accrues to one team detracts equally from the opposite team. Over time statistics show all sports to have over fifty per cent home winning percentage. Why? The ball is the same for both teams.

Interestingly, home field advantage in MLB has decreased every decade since the beginning of the twentieth century, from 60 percent to 53 percent this century, a significant drop.

Generalizations about home field advantage in baseball playoffs are more difficult due to American League dominance. Starting in 2003, the AL won five consecutive All-Star games to give their representative home field advantage, winning four out of five Series. The American League won 11 of the last 16 championships. Besides, the New York Yankees have permanently skewed all home field advantage statistics.

One reason to explain the improvement of road performance is that it is more comfortable for players to travel nowadays whereas in the past players arrived in town beat from lack of sleep and a good bed. Players now fly in deluxe equipped charter planes and stay in the best hotels in every city. Physically they are more ready to play the next day.

However, home advantage in football and basketball playoffs is a fact. Why?

Rules have conspired to make teams more equal than in the past. When two teams are close in ability, then a little edge can be the difference between winning and losing. Any educator or psychologist can tell you the importance of providing positive reinforcement to maximize performance.

Another possible factor is referees giving the benefit to the home team. We are seeing that in Los Angeles where the Lakers are enjoying a huge foul disparity. Paul Gasol hit the winning points in Game 5 on an offensive rebound after pushing Mehmet Okur, who had better position, out of the way, an obvious foul not whistled.

While players may feed off the energy of a home crowd, I

See AWAY on Page 26

Red Sox edge Twins in Little League

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER



The Bank of Saipan Red Sox strengthened its

playoff bid in the Majors division of the Saipan Little League after squeezing out a 17-16 win over the Wells Fargo As Matuus Twins on Thursday at the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Field.

The Red Sox improved to an 11-3 slate to tie the Happy Market Ol'Aces from third to fourth place behind the 14-1 mark of the defending cham-

pion SaipanCell Patriots and the 12-1 slate of the second-running UMDA Hustlers.

Philip Passi started the Red Sox' comeback bid belting an inside-the-park home run to lead the Red Sox' comeback bid going 3-for-4 scoring twice in the game to go with his double and four RBIs.

Trailing 10-3 after 3 1/2 innings, Passi whacked a two-run homer in the Red Sox' five-run fourth-inning rally to close in at 8-10.

Still down at 16-8, Jerome Reyes finished off what Passi started connecting with a two-RBI double in the Red Sox' nine-run bottom of the sixth inning rally. He went 3-for-4 scor-

Dolphins 11, McDonald's 1

On Wednesday at "Tan Ge" Field, Frankie Blas helped the PTI Dolphins cruise to an 11-1 win over Team McDonald's.

Blas pitched a four-hit complete game that was shortened by the 10-run mercy rule. He also had eight strikeouts with no walks and gave up one earned run.

After striking out Mariano Ngeskebei, Blas hit Ryan Butac

by a pitch putting a McDonald's runner on base in the bottom of the fourth. Blas did not lose his focus after that and fanned Clayton Sablan and Herman Guerrero to end the game.

Butac, who singled in the second inning, scored the lone run for McDonald's when he reached home on a Ken Taguchi RBI triple.

Survivors 21, Suns 7

Over at the San Vicente Elementary School Field, Gayvan Uchau pitched three no-hit innings in relief to lead the Martha's Survivors to a 21-7 triumph also on Wednesday.

Uchau, who replaced Poland

See RED on Page 26